

POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP

C.O.P.E.C. COMMISSION REPORT

VOL. X.

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Conference on Christian
politics, economics and
Politics and citizenship

POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP

(LONGMANS, GREEN AND Co.)

Questions for Discussion on the C.O.P.E.C. Commission Reports

In the following Plan of Study it will be noted that, while the order of the Report is followed, Chapter I (which is fundamental) occupies three out of the eight meetings. Also that in most cases, while the passage suggested as the basis of discussion is given first, other sections of the Report throwing light on the study-problem are indicated under the heading "See also."

The eight meetings will thus be occupied as follows :

- I. The Nature and Purpose of the State (Chapter I).
- II. The Authority of the State and the Conflict of Loyalties (Chapter I).
- III. The Responsibility of the Citizen (Chapter I).
- IV. Politics and Party (Chapter II).
- V. Class Divisions (Chapter III).
- VI. Local Government (Chapter IV).
- VII. The Press (Chapter V).
- VIII. Social Service (Chapter VI).

I. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STATE.

(See Chapter I, Section I, *a*; also Sections III and IV.)

1. Was the teaching of Christ addressed to individuals only, or to societies also?

See Matt. xxv. 32 and v. 17, as well as the references in the Note on p. I.

2. Discuss the meaning of the passage Romans xiii. 1-7; and justify the statement that "it enshrined the teaching of the Old Testament and translated into terms of religion the highest moral conceptions of the ancient heathen world."

3. How does the State help men to live according to moral and religious principles?

4. "The real end of the State is not merely any order, but a just order." "The order of the State is just, not so much in virtue of what it has done, as in virtue of that which it is endeavouring to do." What light do these two statements throw on the relation of religion to politics?

II. THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE AND THE CONFLICT OF LOYALTIES.

(See Chapter I, Section I, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*.)

1. "To-day, the authority of the State is challenged by any group of people who become sufficiently in earnest about any political ideal." Do you agree that this tendency is traceable to our failure to insist that the authority of the State has a Divine sanction?

2. "It is desirable that the Government should realise that, if it abuses its power beyond a point, it will not be obeyed." Discuss this statement, with reference to the political history of the last fifteen years.

3. Is the unit of the State the individual, the family, or the association? Is the State "sovereign" over all or any of these?

4. Can the use of physical force by the State be reconciled with the Christian principle that the only force which can redeem the world is love?

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITIZEN.

(See Chapter I, Section II. Also Chapters II, Section I; IV, Section II; and VI, last Section.)

1. To suggest that the religious life is in its nature divorced from political interests "is the most disastrous and irreligious, as well as the most immoral attitude which a Christian can take up." Discuss this statement.

2. How do you relate the above statement to the following: "The ills of the world, now as always, are primarily due to the fact that man is either not seeking God, or is seeking Him through the

wrong channels"; and that in the past 150 years, "in God's providence, the Church has been driven back [from ways of 'peaceful penetration'] upon itself"?

3. And with this: "Behind that hesitation which the Christian often genuinely feels of mixing himself up with these 'merely secular activities,' lies a sense that anything less than a personal relationship is sub-Christian"?

4. The first duty of a citizen "is to form a judgment from the experience available about the requirements of the general good from time to time." How is this Christian citizen to set about doing this?

IV. POLITICS AND PARTY.

(See Chapter II. Also Chapter IV, Section II.)

1. Is it desirable that the Party system should continue? Should it be used in matters of local government? Should Christians be members of their Party organisations?

2. Do you agree that "inter-party" political discussion could with advantage be more freely organised among fellow-Christians?

3. What are the characteristic dangers of the Party system, and the safeguards against them?

4. What should be the relation of the Church as such to political parties?

V. CLASS DIVISIONS.

(See Chapter III. Also Chapter VI, Section VI.)

1. What do you mean by "class divisions"? Are they according to the mind of Christ?

2. "To make 'the proletariat' as such the criterion and the engine of social change is in a fundamental sense a surrender to the very values of that plutocracy its champions seek to overthrow." Discuss this statement.

3. How can we work towards a culture not merely accessible to, but recognisable as their own by, the masses of the people?

4. Criticise the phrase, "equality of opportunity."

VI. LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

(See Chapter IV. Also Chapter VI.)

1. Discuss the extent to which "local self-government" is a reality; *i.e.* the things which a town or area may or may not possess according as it chooses or not to provide itself with them.
2. What is involved in the administrative work of local Councils and Boards?
3. In what ways can Christians work towards the supply of the right candidates for local government work?
4. Is the "Church work" in your area in the right relation to local government work?

VII. THE PRESS.

(See Chapter V.)

1. Describe the ideal newspaper.
2. Describe the present ownership and organisation of the newspaper press. What do you think are the relative values it sets on "interests," advertisements, circulation, and pride in right standards of journalism?
3. Discuss the possibilities latent in (a) Major Astor's proposals for a trustee veto upon editorial appointments; and (b) the suggestion of "a service of public information on a similar footing to the judiciary."
4. Is a journalist morally justified in advocating the policy of his paper contrary to his own convictions?

VIII. SOCIAL SERVICE.

1. Show how the problems of unemployment, housing and leisure are problems of personality and that their claim on us is a claim of spiritual relationships.
2. How does the principle of the primary value of personality affect the political aspect of the present division of property and the present organisation of industry?
3. "Giving directly to persons is a privilege of friendship." Discuss this statement.
4. How should the Christian equip himself for undertaking social service?

N.B.—The Group might well hold a final meeting to consider whether it had any practical recommendations to make to its local Interdenominational Social Council or similar organisation.

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*C.O.P.E.C. COMMISSION
REPORTS*

VOLUME I. THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS
PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD

„ II. EDUCATION
„ III. THE HOME
„ IV. THE RELATION OF THE SEXES
„ V. LEISURE
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THE CHURCH
„ XII. HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS
OF THE SOCIAL EFFECTS
OF CHRISTIANITY

POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP

*Being the Report presented to the Conference on
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at Birmingham, April 5-12, 1924*

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BASIS

THE basis of this Conference is the conviction that the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and the power essential for solving the problems of to-day, that the social ethics of Christianity have been greatly neglected by Christians with disastrous consequences to the individual and to society, and that it is of the first importance that these should be given a clearer and more persistent emphasis. In the teaching and work of Jesus Christ there are certain fundamental principles—such as the universal Fatherhood of God with its corollary that mankind is God's family, and the law "that whoso loseth his life, findeth it"—which, if accepted, not only condemn much in the present organisation of society, but show the way of regeneration. Christianity has proved itself to possess also a motive power for the transformation of the individual, without which no change of policy or method can succeed. In the light of its principles the constitution of society, the conduct of industry, the upbringing of children, national and international politics, the personal relations of men and women, in fact all human relationships, must be tested. It is hoped that through this Conference the Church may win a fuller understanding of its Gospel, and hearing a clear call to practical action may find courage to obey.

GENERAL PREFACE

THE present volume forms one of the series of Reports drawn up for submission to the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship, held in Birmingham in April 1924.

In recent years Christians of all denominations have recognised with increasing conviction that the commission to "go and teach all nations" involved a double task. Alongside of the work of individual conversion and simultaneously with it an effort must be made to Christianise the corporate life of mankind in all its activities. Recent developments since the industrial revolution, the vast increase of population, the growth of cities, the creation of mass production, the specialisation of effort, and the consequent interdependence of individuals upon each other, have given new significance to the truth that we are members one of another. The existence of a system and of methods unsatisfying, if not antagonistic to Christian life, constitutes a challenge to the Church. The work of a number of pioneers during the past century has prepared the way for the attempt to examine and test our social life in the light of the principles revealed in Jesus Christ, and to visualise the requirements of a Christian civilisation. Hitherto such attempts have generally been confined to one or two aspects of citizenship; and, great as has been their value, they have plainly shown the defects of

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sectional study. We cannot Christianise life in compartments: to reform industry involves the reform of education, of the home life, of politics and of international affairs. What is needed is not a number of isolated and often inconsistent plans appropriate only to a single department of human activity, but an ideal of corporate life constructed on consistent principles and capable of being applied to and fulfilled in every sphere.

The present series of Reports is a first step in this direction. Each has been drawn up by a Commission representative of the various denominations of British Christians, and containing not only thinkers and students, but men and women of large and differing practical experience. Our endeavour has been both to secure the characteristic contributions of each Christian communion so as to gain a vision of the Kingdom of God worthy of our common faith, and also to study the application of the gospel to actual existing conditions—to keep our principles broad and clear and to avoid the danger of Utopianism. We should be the last to claim any large or general measure of success. The task is full of difficulty: often the difficulties have seemed insurmountable.

But as it has proceeded we have discovered an unexpected agreement, and a sense of fellowship so strong as to make fundamental divergences, where they appeared, matters not for dispute but for frank and sympathetic discussion. Our Reports will not be in any sense a final solution of the problems with which they are concerned. They represent, we believe, an honest effort to see our corporate life

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steadily and whole from the standpoint of Christianity; and as such may help to bring to many a clearer and more consistent understanding of that Kingdom for which the Church longs and labours and prays.

However inadequate our Reports may appear—and in view of the magnitude of the issues under discussion and the infinite grandeur of the Christian gospel inadequacy is inevitable—we cannot be too thankful for the experience of united inquiry and study and fellowship of which they are the fruit.

It should be understood that these Reports are printed as the Reports of the Commissions only, and any resolutions adopted by the Conference on the basis of these Reports will be found in *The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C.*, which also contains a General Index to the series of Reports.

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* Unable to attend the Meetings of the Commission.

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CHAPTER I

THE STATE

CHAPTER I

THE STATE¹

I. PURPOSE, AUTHORITY, AND METHOD

(a) *Nature and purpose of the State.*—There has been in the past, and still exists to-day, a disposition to think that the primary purpose of the State is to keep order or to maintain peace. No doubt it is

¹ For the argument against the suggestion that the teaching of Christ was addressed to individuals and not to societies, see Chapter I. of the Report of the Commission on Industry and Property. To the references there given, we would add under (d) St. Matt. xi. 20-24: “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!” etc. It is the “cities” as such that might have repented and would not. As also in the lament over Jerusalem (St. Luke xix. 41-44; St. Matt. xxiii. 57 ff.). The same Report deals with many points affecting politics, and, while we are not responsible for the views there expressed, we have avoided, so far as possible, covering the same ground. We may therefore refer to Chapter I. pp. 9-10, where certain general principles are stated, and to the section in Chapter IX. on “Remedial Action by the State.”

The first question with which we have to deal is this: How far is it possible to regard the community under the terms of its political organisation as a religious institution, *i.e.* as a means of helping men to live according to moral and spiritual principles?

In order to answer this question, we have to take into account the purpose of the State, the nature of its authority, the responsibilities of its individual members; and the methods by which it seeks to realise that purpose, exercise that authority, and enforce those responsibilities.

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true that this is an immensely important aspect of the function of the State. Yet this conception has often been entirely misleading. For the real end of the State is not merely any order, but a just order. The end of the State is not merely peace, but a peace which corresponds with men's sense of justice, and which gives the fullest possible opportunity for the free development of the best capacities in men, both individually and communally. We may put this in other words and say that the action of the State is to be directed to an end determined by the moral and spiritual character of human nature.

It is from this standpoint that we must approach the traditional Christian conception of the nature of the State, for there is a Christian tradition, and it is significant and emphatic. The history of the Christian conception of the State might be described as representing a continuous effort to understand the meaning of the words of St. Paul: "The powers that be are ordained of God." The authority of the State is a Divine authority, or at least it derives its authority from God Himself. These words, however, have been applied in various ways, and we must therefore consider what it was exactly that St. Paul meant. There was at one time current an interpretation of the words which represented St. Paul as meaning that the authority of the ruler, whether it was exercised well or ill, justly or unjustly, was always an absolute and unlimited authority, and that Christian men were bound to obey even a wholly unjust ruler. This was the doctrine known as that of the "Divine

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Right of Kings." But this was not what St. Paul meant, nor was it in this sense that the tradition of the Christian society normally interpreted his words.

St. Paul does not only say that the authority of the ruler is ordained by God, he also gives his reason for saying this. The authority is Divine, he says, because it is its function to maintain a righteous order: "for rulers are not a terror to the good works but to the evil." The function of the State is the maintenance of a just order, a righteous system of life.

The doctrine of St. Paul was not a new doctrine; it enshrined the teaching of the Old Testament and translated into terms of religion the highest moral conceptions of the ancient heathen world. It is here that we find the first and most important aspect of the relation of religion to politics.

It may be said indeed by those who do not reflect, that all this is after all a little abstract, and has little relation to the actual nature and the practical problems of human society. But this is not true, St. Paul's phrase represents the attempt to express in more precise terms the common instinct of human life, that common instinct which, in the end, controls all human action, the sense of a difference between that which is fair and reasonable, and that which is unfair and inequitable. It is this and this alone which makes the common life possible.

We may put the point in another way which will perhaps make the matter still clearer. In the principles of Christianity and of all serious philosophical thinkers, the authority of the State is not the

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expression of mere force, but rather the expression of some principle of righteousness of which force should be merely the servant.

It may, however, be urged that this conception of the just or moral order has never, at any time, been perfect and complete, and that it is impossible to say that, even in its imperfect form, it has ever been completely realised in practice in any human society. This is true, but in saying it we merely recognise that human society is like the individual life. It finds its true character not in that which it has achieved, but in that which it is endeavouring to achieve; its perfection lies not behind but before. Justice or righteousness is undefinable, perhaps because it means an adjustment of human relations to an ideal which is never fulfilled, because it perpetually grows and advances. The order of the State is just, not so much in virtue of what it has done, as in virtue of that which it is endeavouring to do. This does not mean that men are therefore to despise or neglect what has already been gained, or to refrain from taking their part in the common life of the State because it is not already perfect. Rather it means that the higher are their own ideals, the more are they bound to do what lies in them to help the society of which they are members towards some better thing.

(b) *The authority of the State.*—It is very necessary in these days that stress should be laid on the moral authority of the State. The old revolutionary school made the State the representative of the popular will. The authority of the State was based on that will (expressed, according to some, simply

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by "universal suffrage," *i.e.* a majority) and was often treated as supreme and unlimited. The Christian point of view is that the authority of the State has a Divine sanction, that it can demand obedience in God's name. Where a State bases its claim merely on the popular will, so that obedience becomes a matter of expediency, or even on the idea of justice alone, as to the application of which there must always be differences of opinion, the result follows which we see to-day; the authority of the State is challenged by any group of people who become sufficiently in earnest about any political ideal. In such circumstances, Christians have a duty to insist that power is of God, though the holders of the power are of human appointment, and, being human, are liable to err. But when the State (however constituted) is doing its work of applying principles of justice, the presumption is that it should be obeyed. Believing in God, we must naturally insist that unless the State's authority is traced to its true source in the mission of Him to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, its true relationship with its members is not likely to be recognised. Men are not indeed absolved from obedience to the State by the fact that the State does not acknowledge the one source of its authority, any more than they are bound to an unlimited obedience by the fact that it does acknowledge it, but it is only by such an acknowledgment that the State can become the willing instrument of the Divine purpose by which the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ.

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(c) *Political Obedience*.—It must be observed that in stating the purpose of the State, we have already indicated the limits of its function. Its function is limited by its end, the establishment and maintenance of a just order. Its authority should not be pressed beyond that function, and, if so pressed, it may be challenged. The extent to which this right of challenge may be exercised by the individual Christian according to his own fallible judgment, or by the Christian Church as a whole, is a question to which no complete answer can be given; we can only say that the powers that are ordained by God must not be challenged save in the name of God, and that the Christian must not take that name in vain.

The primary and essential fact about man is his relationship to God. This relationship is the basis of Christian life, and to it all other relationships are secondary. It implies that at all times and in all places man has access to God and can count on God's guidance. This guidance comes to him in various ways, through the ordained or constituted authorities of Church and State, through his fellow-Christians and fellow-citizens, and through his own reason and spiritual perception.

The Christian Church is the association of all who are trying to live the Christian life. It is natural and necessary, because man cannot divest himself of his relationships to other men; it exists for the sake of the good life in the highest sense of the words—the enjoyment of God, as Thomas Aquinas puts it—and for the redemption of mankind. On earth the Church must have the power

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to decide its membership, and, like other associations, it must have organisation and government.

The State is another association : to-day it is a territorial group of human beings organised under a government which is allowed the power of physical coercion. It has a moral purpose, and a Divine authority. The individual has therefore a *prima facie* duty of obedience to the State and its instrument, the Government.

God, the Church, the State : man owes obedience to all three. What if their several claims on his loyalty conflict? or rather, what if, in a special case, he doubt whether in obeying the Church or the State he will be obeying God? We do not propose to touch here on the conflict of loyalties between Church and conscience, and we shall only touch on that between Church and State as part of the larger issue between conscience and State ; though historically it was under the ægis of the Church that the conscience learnt to dare defy the State. In what circumstance can the presumption that obedience is due to the State be rebutted?

First, with regard to obedience, not in a particular case, but in general ; when does a State forfeit its general claim to allegiance? The extreme case would be where all the powers of the State are being used for what is, in fact, an immoral end ; when, in mediæval phrase, the ruler is the vicar, not of God, but of the devil. The marginal case would be where the State does more harm than good. Many English Catholics must have thought that such a case had arisen in the days of the Elizabethan penal laws ; many nationalists thought so in

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the nineteenth century—and after; and some Socialists think so to-day. Such people's natural remedy, assuming that they are not anarchists, who object to the State as such, is, while preserving the State-form, to secure a change in its policy or its composition by constitutional means. Where there are no constitutional means, or circumstances are such as to render them ineffective (as, for instance, in the case of the American colonies in the eighteenth century), the choice lies between obedience and rebellion, which Locke dignified with the title of the "appeal to Heaven." Locke's phrase, however, begs the question, since presumably civil war is not necessary to secure Divine action. In making the choice between obedience and rebellion, a Christian will naturally consider whether or not the action of the State actually makes, or tends to make, the practice of the Christian life difficult; whether or not it encourages immoral conduct or thought; what probability there is of establishing a system of government more satisfactory in these respects; and what will be the cost, *in moral values*, of establishing it? It would be unprofitable to go further; the casuistry of the subject was discussed to weariness in the seventeenth century. It is sufficient to say that in making his individual choice the Christian can count, if sincerely desirous of it, on Divine guidance.

In deciding whether or not he ought to obey any particular orders of the State, the Christian will be influenced by similar considerations. He will remember that the habit of law-abidingness, if broken in some cases for good reasons, will be more easily

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broken in others for bad reasons, and that the authority of the State will be shaken in consequence. On the other hand, it is desirable that the Government should realise that, if it abuses its power beyond a point, it will not be obeyed. Refusal of obedience is, of course, a different thing from resistance to punishment.

What should be the attitude of the State to the conscientious recusant, assuming that he can be distinguished from the malicious law-breaker? In the light of its own moral purpose it must weigh the importance of securing the execution of the law against the importance of encouraging loyalty to conscience. A wise Government will do all it can to prevent the conflict from arising; it will require much more than the assent of a bare majority for legislation to which there is "conscientious" opposition; and, wherever possible, it will make a judicious allowance of "conscience clauses." But cases may arise where the service demanded appears so essential to the community, or its refusal so unreasonable or inequitable, that the Government thinks it right to enforce the law by restraint. It is even possible that the individual may be right in disobeying, and the Government right in restraining; if so, we are entitled to believe that neither will suffer from the performance of duty.

(d) *Rights of Associations*.—Again, dealing with the question of the rights of the State, it is worth while to point out that there is danger in a simple division of the community into Church and State; and still greater danger in regarding the State as an

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omni-competent sovereign body. Christian thought, however its theory may have been affected by the theories of Roman law, in practice has always claimed that there are rights, which no State should override, inherent in certain associations, such as the family, or the Church itself. And modern political thinkers wisely emphasise that it is important, for the full and free development of personality, to recognise the real and original life belonging to the functional associations which grow naturally out of the social nature of mankind. Clubs and trade unions, universities and academies, religious orders and co-operative societies, have a quasi-personality, which is not merely a legal fiction, but a vital fact, not created by the State, but merely recognised by it. The State is not omnipotent over these other forms of social life ; it is, no doubt, supreme among them, but it must accord to each of them its due place, if it is to guarantee a healthy social order.

(e) *Coercion as a method of State action.*—Having considered the question of the relationships of the individual and of societies towards the State, we must turn to the question of the method by which the State, as distinguished from other human societies, seeks to attain its end, that is, the maintenance and development of a righteous and moral order. We are here confronted with a question that we must answer. The characteristic that distinguishes the State, under normal conditions, from other associations, is that it possesses and can exercise a directly coercive authority. It does not merely advise or encourage men to a particular

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action or abstention from action ; if necessary it compels men. Other associations indeed often use methods of apparently the same kind, the methods of exclusion, but wherever this exclusion has to be carried out by force, it is the State that exercises the force. The State does not limit itself to exclusion, it uses compulsion, and, in the last resort, force.

There are some who cannot accept this, and it is impossible for any rational mind to refuse all sympathy with this temper. For the State has often used its force for wholly wrong purposes, and in lamentably wrong ways ; and it is only to be expected that human nature being what it is, ignorant and passionate, it may often do so in the future. And we have now learned that in relation to some of the most important aspects of life, coercion is not merely foolish but monstrous. In certain aspects of the intellectual, the artistic, or the religious life, coercion is not merely impossible, but absurd. In these matters there can be no coercive authority, but only an authority of persuasion.

There are, however, other aspects of life of which this is not true. Men and women are, in the Christian doctrine, made in the image of God, the children of God, and capable of a life of communion with God ; but also they are moved by passions, desires, and even ideals, which bring them constantly into violent conflict with their fellows. And it is with this conflict that the coercive authority of the State has to deal. Historically, it has been the normal conception of Christian society that this is legitimate ; that while the individual may decline to use the power of society to protect himself against

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the fraud and violence of other men, the State is the guardian of right against wrong, of the weak against the powerful, and its first duty is to use its power for these purposes. It is the function of the State in the first place to maintain order ; not any order, but a legal order, recognised and accessible to all ; and, in the second, to adjust the legal order continuously to the changing conditions of life, as the sense of justice in the community shall direct. And in pursuing this end the State rightly uses its force.

II. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITIZEN

We can now consider in its religious aspect the responsibility of the individual to the State. We must consider this more especially from the stand-point of modern civilised communities in which the individual is not merely a subject, but a citizen, a citizen who has his share in controlling the action of the State, both in legislation and administration. For, in the modern State, it is the community that governs. Its officers ought indeed not merely to follow, but to lead, yet the ultimate control rests with the community itself.

Even among those who recognise the necessity of the State, and the legitimacy of its authority, there is sometimes evident a tendency to treat public affairs as so fundamentally tainted with anti-Christian interests that it is impossible for a Christian to allow himself to be in them. So far as this means that conditions may arise in which a Christian may be unable to associate with the existing organ-

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isation of government, without in effect denying his religious convictions, there is an element of truth involved. But the tendency to which we refer often goes much further than this. It suggests that the religious life is, in its very nature, divorced from the actual organisation of political societies. Its interests are eternal, spiritual, other-worldly, and as such have no bearing on politics, which are of the earth, earthy. This is the most disastrous and irreligious, as well as the most immoral attitude which a Christian can take up, and implies the most fundamental confusion about the nature of the State. For, as we have seen, the function and purpose of the State is the establishment and maintenance of some moral order in life, a moral order for which justice is a convenient name, and its authority rests in the end upon this and upon nothing else. It is therefore impossible for a man who believes that life has a spiritual, a moral character, to rid himself of the responsibility of doing all that he can do to enable the State to realise the purpose for which it exists, and to embody in its actual working the spiritual principles which he holds to be right. Nor can he refuse to take any part which he is called upon to accept in directing and controlling the affairs of the State, except upon the conviction of a vocation for other service, or in the belief that he can achieve the same end more effectively by abstaining. If citizenship is a right, it is equally a responsibility, a sacred and spiritual responsibility ; and, in participating in or abstaining from, any particular form of political activity, the Christian citizen must be mindful of that responsibility.

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It is, of course, perfectly true that a great part of the action of the State is related to questions of utility rather than of morality, but it would be absurd to allow ourselves to be misled by this. What is true of the State is equally true of the individual. It may be said that the greater part of human actions have in themselves little of good or evil, but are rather, in their nature, from the moral point of view, indifferent. But all these actions in themselves indifferent are, after all, controlled and dominated by, and derive their ultimate nature from the character of the man whose actions they are. And so it is with the State also.

In a democratic State especially, just because democracy exists to give all their chance of effectively expressing their judgments, it becomes the duty of all to form a judgment on the great questions of the hour. Detachment is a form of treason. It is only possible on the assumption that only those who have the inclination need trouble about public affairs. In practice, this means that many of those who will take an active part will be those who have special interests to serve; and democracy becomes an arena for the conflict of competing selfishnesses. This, in its full development, can be a thing viler than any despotism; for though the tyrant may be utterly selfish, his subjects may be lifted to a conception of public service, even if it be only to risk their lives in trying to kill the tyrant. But a country which has set up democratic machinery and then lets political selfishness run riot, has done all it can to ruin the personality of its citizens, and to frustrate

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all hope of fellowship. Democracy only attains its goal when its citizens think more of their duties than of their rights. And the first duty is to form a judgment from the experience available about the requirements of the general good from time to time.

It cannot be said that everyone is morally bound to vote—at least, until there is a possibility of voting against all the available candidates. But it is a duty to vote, or to abstain from voting, in accordance with a carefully formed judgment. The responsibility for non-action is just as great as the responsibility for action; and inactivity is as fruitful as activity. The man who votes neither for nor against a reform has, in effect, used his vote to retain the *status quo*, for he has contributed to its continuance by withholding his bit of pressure from the forces that sought to change it. A sense of personal responsibility for the use or non-use of the vote is the first condition of health in a democracy.

III. FURTHER REMARKS ON THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION CONCERNING THE STATE

Turning from this theoretical statement to a brief consideration of the Christian tradition concerning the State, we come back to the point at which we said that Christianity enshrined the teaching of the Old Testament and translated into terms of religion the ancient Greek idea of the body politic. Christ Himself bore witness to the authority of Cæsar. Remembering His injunction, the early Christians recognised the political order

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as God's minister. They gave it obedience even while it persecuted them, and the earliest liturgies testify to the place they gave it in their prayers. They are even found "petitioning emperors and governors, and addressing written appeals to society, demanding the abolition of gross and flagrant abuses and outrages" (Harnack and Hermann, *The Social Gospel*, p. 17). But of course they were not faced by the same conditions as had faced, for instance, the people to whom the Old Testament prophets spoke. They were not part of an autonomous society; still less had they any direct responsibility for government.

But Christ had not only testified to the authority of Cæsar, He had indicated that it had limits. "To God the things that are God's." And it is of historical importance that the early Christians, applying that maxim in the most literal way, found their ideals clashing with those of the Roman Empire; they found themselves obliged to refuse obedience on certain points which the world around them regarded as a test of loyalty. To this early period of conflict between Church and State succeeded the period of the Christian Empire, when the balance between the things of Cæsar and the things of God became disturbed in other ways. However, when the Church emerges from the Dark Ages in process of converting the new world of the barbarians, she emerges with the doctrine of Christian kingship or lordship—lord, king, or emperor, as the "temporal" representative of the authority of the just law of God, as the Christian priesthood was of the "spiritual" authority.

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In mediæval Christendom, then, the function of the State was the maintenance, if necessary by force, of the just order ; the function of the Church was to teach and persuade of that same order, and to bring men into touch with it by bringing them into touch with God.

But the growth of autocratic States in Europe during the Middle Ages, followed by the Renaissance and Reformation, and the consolidation of the State system on a national basis during the last two hundred years, have again profoundly disturbed this balance. In consequence, we have now a variety of philosophic theories regarding the Church and State, but in effect no Christian theory. Since the passing of the universal Empire of the early Middle Ages we have tried many experiments ; we have had the policy of the Hildebrandine Popes ; we have had the Councils of the fifteenth century ; we have had established Churches, we have had concordats, we have had Churches which renounced any official connection with the State, but which, nevertheless, took a pronounced part in political contests. None of these experiments have satisfied us, and all sections of the Church have come increasingly to realise that none of them is according to the mind of Christ. We have to confess that too often the Church has tended to substitute worship of its own machinery for devotion to the ends it ought to serve. In seeking to realise a Christian theory we have to face the fact that there is to-day no united Church, and that in society the Christian faith is not, as in the mediæval world, in possession, nor yet, as in the early Church, a new challenge.

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We no longer preach God's authority in the life of every society in all its aspects, economic and political, intellectual and artistic. We have to realise our failure in this matter, and to reconsider our challenge to the world accordingly. So far as the political order is concerned, the principle to be vindicated remains the same which we have traced from the beginnings of Christianity ; that the State exists to maintain and develop the just order in a community, and that on the Christian there lies a claim for co-operation and obedience in the name of God.

IV. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STATE

In concluding this chapter it is necessary, lest we should give a false idea of the relative values we desire to express, to say quite clearly that, in the mind of the Christian, the function of the State, great as it is, must never overshadow the function of the Church. Our adherence to the idea of Christian politics could work nothing but evil if, by any words of ours, we should encourage men to fix their hopes, not on Christ, but on Cæsar. Whatever contributions politics may be able to bring to the accomplishment of God's purpose, the redemption of man's nature—body, soul, and spirit—must depend on means utterly beyond the scope of human policy. It depends upon our membership in the Body of Christ, on the bread that we break and the cup that we bless. The current conception that if we seek to do good, it matters nothing what we believe, or whether we worship, is shallow and

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untrue. The ills of the world now, as always, are primarily due to the fact that man is either not seeking God, or is seeking Him through the wrong channels; that is, either not worshipping Him at all, or worshipping Him falsely.

The question of the proper functions of the State has been discussed by Christians for nearly 1600 years, ever since the Roman Empire became nominally Christian under Constantine. We could not add anything new to this discussion to-day. Indeed a general answer to this question is probably impossible. In the purpose of God, the functions of the State would appear to vary at different times and in different places. In the Bible, we are shown at least two main phases; a period from Moses to the Babylonian captivity when, in God's revelation to the Jews, what we should now call the civil and the moral law were closely interlocked, and a period from the Babylonian captivity to the primitive Church, when first the Jew and then (from a more advanced standpoint) the Christian were bidden to serve heathen rulers as God's ordained instruments of government, while preserving in morals, worship and hope the special revelation made to them. Generally speaking, Christians have instinctively felt that the first of these models is not at all, and the second not in all respects, applicable to the relations between the Christian Church and a State actually or nominally Christian, but God's will as to those relations does not seem to have been fully revealed to the Church. Where the Church has been left without definite light on a matter of such vital importance, Chris-

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tians are bound to ask themselves whether the conditions themselves are in accordance with God's will, or whether, in part at least, they may not have grown up owing to some failure by the Church to fulfil her mission. Israel seems to have fallen into an anomalous condition, somewhat similar to this, almost from the beginning of the monarchical period, and especially under the later kings, and it is at least suggestive that these anomalies were consistently represented by the Jewish prophets as the result of disobedience to God's will. In these circumstances the question for Christians is not so much what is the best "constitutional" solution of our present perplexities—the best compromise in a confused situation—but rather what should the Christian faith and hope lead us to *desire*. Such a question can only be answered by recollecting what are the Christian faith and hope.

We believe that man's salvation is to know God and to be made like Him. Human progress consists in accepting God's revelation of Himself.

God chooses His own means and channels of revelation, varying at different times and in different places, and He can only be approached in the ways that He ordains for the purpose. To mankind generally He has given the witness of nature and of conscience, but for His full purpose of redemption He has from the beginning chosen certain men and groups of men as the recipients, and channels of His special teaching. The Bible is a record of this central scheme of revelation through the Jewish law and the prophets to the supreme manifestation of God in Christ.

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We believe that in Christ, in His Incarnation, His baptism, His work, His atonement, His resurrection, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit to the Church concerning Him, God reveals to man both what He is and how alone man may attain to His likeness. In this way of attainment lies our only hope of salvation, and it follows that in our advance along that way lies the only true progress of the human race.

It seems clear that the early Church believed in this "gospel" as a whole, and regarded it as, in the strictest sense, "practical politics." In apostolic times Christians were taught, not only that they were members of Christ, and partakers of the Divine nature, but also that in virtue of that membership and that participation they must be transformed in body, as well as in spirit, into the likeness of the risen Christ. This expectation was bound up with the expectation of the Second Advent, and, with it, have become involved to-day all those speculations that go by the name of eschatology. But the endless arguments as to whether the early Church was mistaken in its interpretation of God's will as to "times and seasons," or whether, on the contrary, the fulfilment of God's will was delayed by the unpreparedness of the Church, are quite irrelevant to the main issue. Of one thing there is no doubt; in the faith delivered to the saints, the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living was not a piece of machinery incidental to the "day of judgment," but was the goal to which the way of attainment led; and that way, with all its sufferings, would have become meaningless

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without the goal. Christians were pledged, not to mere obedience to a moral law, but to faith in a way of actual redemption for mankind, and to deny the final steps in that redemption would have been to make their faith and their sufferings vain.

So long as this faith occupied the foreground of the Christian mind, political questions necessarily receded into the remote background. The government of the world, of undoubted importance to the material and moral welfare of mankind, was profoundly irrelevant to its *hope*. The establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth was unthinkable apart from the return of the King and the perfecting of the members of His Body by the resurrection.

The time came, however, when this faith, in its turn, gradually receded into the background. In its place arose the idea that the Kingdom of God was to be established on earth, not as the result of the Second Coming and the resurrection, but as a kind of necessary preliminary to those events. The Kingdom was to be established by a kind of "peaceful penetration," by the "Christianisation" of the peoples and of the governments of the world. From this standpoint, politics became of supreme importance, and the Church became involved with the State in its efforts to permeate society and government in the name of Christ.

The recent course of politics, at any rate since the French Revolution, has at least strongly discouraged these efforts. Nearly everywhere in the last 150 years the State has risen and cast out the Church, and this process has been, in a sense, completed in our own day in the Eastern and Western

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branches of the Church by the Russian Revolution and the dissolution of the Austrian Empire. In these circumstances we should recognise, that, in God's providence, the Church has been driven back upon itself, and that if it is to influence the world, its influence must be based upon the faith once delivered to the saints. We should proclaim that the spirit which works in the Church is not a mere healthy moral influence at the service of the State, but the Spirit of Him whose purpose it is to "change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body." This is the only way of progress and redemption for mankind, and the function of the Church is not merely to show forth what St. Paul called the "fruits" of the Spirit in our social relations, but to exercise what he called the "gifts" of the Spirit as the powers of the "new creation."

CHAPTER II

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND SOME OF ITS PROBLEMS

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THE whole *raison d'être* of a Government is to act for the community in attaining its political end. The form or Constitution should be that form which secures the most effective action. What this will be, depends partly upon circumstances such as means of communication, partly upon educational developments. When both are primitive, the community is most effectively governed by a monarch. There cannot be a conscious "public opinion" until communications are rapid, and some reasonable standard of education is generally secured. At a later stage there is a considerable class in whom a real public opinion can grow, and a constitution with a limited franchise becomes appropriate. Last of all comes full representative Government, to which the term "democracy" is usually attached.

This is not merely one form of constitution, it is, in a sense, the constitution *par excellence*. It is not this because it is the best machine. Up to date it has not made good a claim to be the best machine. But it is clear that the State realises its own nature most of all when all its members consciously and freely take their share in its life,

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and contribute their various gifts to its resources. The form of government which corresponds with this is one which gives every citizen a voice in making the laws which he is to obey.

If the State is regarded as an end in itself, democracy is no whit superior to other forms of government. But we hold that the end of social life is the development of personality in fellowship. It is clear that democracy is, at least, capable of corresponding to this ideal more fully than are the other forms. But it sets a standard for citizens and for parties higher than do other forms, and its failure may be more complete than theirs.

Democracy, as a constitutional term, does not, however, necessarily mean a pure parliamentary sovereignty. In practice, all civilised constitutions limit the functions and powers of the people's representatives in various ways, and draw distinctions, more or less emphatic, between executive, judiciary and the elective legislature. If democracy is to be safeguarded against the dangers of the usurpation involved in mere majority rule, it is desirable that a democratic constitution should recognise the distinction between the people's will and God's authority, between the citizen's free offer of service to God and God's gift of authority in answer to that offer.

Democracy assumes a high level of moral and mental education. It implies everywhere "the duty of private judgment," that it is the duty of each to think for himself, and to act on the conclusions that he reaches. But he must think, and this means that he must be eager to hear the best that

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can be said on the side opposed to that which he tends to take. Our habit of reading only such newspapers as we agree with turns the chief means of our political education into a process of constantly hardening our prejudices.

I. POLITICAL EDUCATION

It ought to be realised, however, that frequently when there is an adequate sense of responsible citizenship, there is an equal sense of inability to form a right judgment. Issues are presented to the public in a confused or biased fashion. Lip-service to certain ideals is paid by competing candidates, but the depth and sincerity of these professions cannot be tested. Candidates are often unknown, or are not authenticated by responsible people. Knowledge of facts is not easily obtainable, especially relating to business and foreign affairs. Rivals present figures for propaganda purposes, and it is sometimes most difficult for the public to arrive at a just conclusion. Electors, too, may be found not infrequently who frankly say that despite a multiplicity of candidates, there is not one for whom they care to vote. All this is a serious reflection upon our capacity to keep pace with the clamant need for political education. Meantime the professional politician bewails the fact that he can only get a very small proportion of the electorate to join a political association, that he pipes while the electors refuse to dance. Modern democracy will have to face the very difficult problem of political education. This problem is considered in the report on the Social

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Function of the Church, and we need not go over the same ground. There is, however, a distinction between education in social questions and education in politics. The housing problem, for instance, must be studied before the citizen can decide whether, or how far, the use of the power of Government can solve that problem. It is one of our besetting sins at the present day, that we too often assume the need for political action, or the undesirability of political action, in the solution of a given problem, before we have examined the conditions of that problem. Political education, properly so called, begins from the other end; it deals with human experience in the formation and management of political societies, and with general principles which are, to some extent, independent of the particular social problems of the moment. We have already indicated what we believe to be the Christian view about political societies generally, and we feel that the Church should contribute to general political education by impressing upon her members the principle of God's authority as the source of all political power. Such teaching is much needed as a corrective to many social theories which leave God wholly out of account.

But when social study and general political theory have combined to produce a definite political demand, then a kind of political education becomes necessary, which must in practice largely remain in the hands of professional politicians. The trouble nowadays is not so much that the electors prefer smoking concerts to political meetings; for, in the first place, this is by no means generally

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true, and, in the second place, it is right that a politician who claims to represent his constituents should talk with them socially, and not only at them from a platform. Nor need we be much concerned about the old evil of the rich politician who is content to buy popularity, for in these days, when nearly every seat is hotly contested, that game has become unsafe and the electors can be generally trusted to see the difference between public-spirited generosity and mere corruption. The real trouble is that the pressure of parliamentary business and the great extension of the franchise nowadays prevents even the man who wishes to keep in touch with his constituents from doing so to anything like the necessary extent. In such circumstances he can only carry out the double duty of learning his constituents' views and acquainting them with his own through the medium of his local political association, and if representative government is to be anything but a legal fiction, we have therefore come to the point when political organisation is essential, not merely for party, but also for national ends.

This brings us to the question of political parties and party politics.

II. POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY POLITICS

We have claimed that it is a normal Christian duty to take a share in political affairs. And so far, once fairly contemplated, this has seemed reasonably clear. We think it will be felt that the difficulty comes in because politics are notoriously party

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matters. We need to consider, first, whether this is right and proper; and secondly, how the duty of a Christian and of a Church stands, having regard to these parties.

Some kind of party system seems to be quite natural and useful. Men tend to separate into tolerably well-defined groups on the basis of their social experience and their temperaments. Temperament supplies two main principles of decision. By temperament some men are disposed to welcome change and some to resent it; some tend to think in terms of emancipation, others in terms of union; the organic and the mechanical conception of the State each appeal to different types of mind. In the abstract, any of these tendencies and any combination of them is compatible with Christian principles: a Christian may find himself acting with a group representing any of them; it is all to the good that each such group should have Christian men in it to leaven it, and so far the Church, as such, has no call to differentiate between one group or another.

The differences of social experience make the matter more complicated. Looking at parties in the concrete, we see that, to a considerable degree, the tendency (*e.g.* to welcome or to resent change) is determined by the pleasantness or otherwise of the environment of which a man has experience. Or, in other words, parties do in fact represent not merely philosophical or psychological differences, but interests. Here, again, it is perfectly right and proper that a man should speak of that which he knows, and press for due recognition of the interests

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he represents. But it is obvious that a danger arises of his failing to give due weight to the interests of which he has not personal experience. The report of the Commission on the Social Function of the Church, already mentioned, points out how the Church, a fellowship of men and women having all kinds of different social experience, can mitigate such misunderstandings by its teaching, and by providing opportunities for discussion. The contribution which the Church can thus make belongs, indeed, to what we have called the stage of social study rather than to the stage of actual political discussion, but at this later stage the Church might often usefully substitute "inter-party" discussion for "non-party," just as it has already substituted "interdenominational" for "non-sectarian" in the other half of the well-known phrase. If, as we have indicated, the best hope for political education lies in the proper growth of party associations in each constituency, including men and women of all "classes," the Church should strive, by bringing the members of these different associations together, to allay the bitterness which too often arises out of party contests. In many constituencies it requires real courage for a man or woman to identify himself or herself openly with a political party opposed to that to which his or her neighbours or associates belong. There are signs that the old standards of "good form" in politics are weakening, because many electors regard them, perhaps naturally, as a sign of the unreality of the old party game, and the Church has, we think, no more important duty in the political sphere than

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to translate the old standards into definitely Christian terms, insisting that, the more *real* politics become, the greater is the duty of men of all parties to "forbear one another in love."

It may be asked why party methods should be politically necessary; whether the method of coalition, or pooling of wisdom, is not suggested as the Christian method, by what has just been said. On the whole, the party system seems the best, for two reasons. If a coalition is formed at any time except when there is one objective accepted by the whole community, it tends to act by a policy which is merely what all can agree upon, and no one set of principles gets its chance; the points on which there is sharp difference tend to be ignored, though often they are the most urgent. And though this is aggravated by moral causes, such as selfish clinging to office, it is not wholly due to these. It is very seldom that men have the sheer mental grasp to find the policy which really harmonises the best elements in the policies prompted by the various points of view.

It seems better to let those points of view become the springs of separate parties, each of which has its turn at initiating legislation, and carries as much as the criticism of the other party or parties makes possible. When we review the nineteenth century, we see the course of movement as almost direct, though the parties alternate, and attack each other fiercely at each point. For, in fact, the politicians of any one period can only represent the various aspects of the mind of their time, and in that mind there is a unity between them in the sense that the

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leaders of the various parties to-day resemble each other in outlook far more closely than any of them resembles a party leader of one hundred years ago.

If this is true of Parliament, it is also true of the constituencies. Non-party associations may be started, but they have little vitality, and they are really more liable to be captured by one particular interest than are party associations. It is more healthy that men should be associated together in an attempt to provide a Government for the nation, than in one to reduce taxation, or protect tenants, or abolish vivisection. Even great aims, such as temperance or women's rights, may be so pursued by non-party associations as to hamper good Governments and encourage bad ones.

But if parties are necessary, each party should recognise the fact. Each should strive to define the intellectual differences which distinguish it from the other, and each should recognise in the other a point of view which is of value to the national life. We have spoken of temperament above, but not in the modern fashionable sense of the term. Men have no right to join a party because they have a conservative or liberal "complex"; they must arrive there by following God's guidance according to the character and the power of reasoning which He has given them. This should be the real basis of mutual respect between parties, and party government can only be tolerable if it provides the maximum of opportunity in Parliament, not merely for the statement in "full-dress debates" of principles, which oratory on such occasions too easily debases into mere prejudice, but for the more sober, intel-

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lectual discussion of particular points which mark, or should mark, proceedings in Committee.

It appears, then, that our aim should be, not the merging of parties in a coalition, but the education of each party to recognise, not only the points of view for which it stands itself, but also the aspects of truth represented by the other parties. Thus we may retain the efficiency which comes from legislation by a body of people united by sincere belief in their political principles; without the bitterness that comes from letting the human instinct of pugnacity find, in party, an outlet for unrestrained activity. We should in this way avoid one of the evils besetting our present habits, namely, that if everyone thinks a thing ought to be done, there is no time to do it; for as it is not a "party" question, there is no party capital in it, and it is crowded out by the questions that have that advantage. If parties recognised themselves for what they are, embodiments of certain aspects of a truth which requires them all for its full expression, agreed measures would obtain their right place on their merits.

But not only do agreed measures fail to get their proper place; an even worse evil is, that parties too often deliberately try to create disagreements where none exist. In social reform questions, especially, each party tries to outbid the other, and this bidding often comes very near pure money bribery. If one party offers to raise the means limit for old-age pensions, another offers to raise it still higher, and a third offers pensions for all. Agriculture, housing and health-insurance are all essen-

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tially non-party questions, but elections are fought on promises in regard to agricultural wages, rents, and the remuneration of panel doctors. For this, electors and politicians are equally to blame, and the Church may well protest against the tendency to degrade party politics into an auction, and to corrupt the noblest aims of social reform into something very like the covetousness which is idolatry.

The chief safeguards of the party system in political life are :

(1) That the difference between parties should be a difference of means, not of ends. The general welfare of the community must be the common end of all parties, and the party man must be prepared to believe that the men of other parties (however mistaken he may think them in regard to means) have the same end in view. The exclusive assumption of virtue by one party is priggish and unchristian.

(2) That there shall be a real difference of policy between the parties. Where this is not the case, party contest inevitably deteriorates into a mere scramble for the spoils of office. Contests of principle enoble : contests of interests degrade.

(3) That parties shall not allow any subscription to their funds to carry with it any control over their policy. In America and elsewhere there have been various attempts to secure the publication of all party subscriptions, but these attempts have been more or less ineffective. The only real remedy is to reduce the cost of politics by encouraging the electorate to demand information instead of advertisement, lectures and discussions rather than posters

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and handbills. It is quite possible for a party organisation in a constituency to make itself nearly self-supporting without the help of large subscriptions, and what is true of the local organisation can be made true of the party organisation as a whole. This is another reason for encouraging the development of party organisations on the lines we have indicated.

One difficulty in regard to parties is that, at any given moment, party loyalty demands support for the party programme as a whole, while probably no member of the party fully believes in all the points in that programme, or considers that it covers all that it should cover. We have already said that parties which exist in order to provide a national government are, on the whole, a safer guide than associations formed to promote some particular project; and what is true of associations is true of the individual members of a party. The party man rightly thinks first how a good Government may best be formed and maintained; he will probably go wrong if he tries to get a government which will do all he wants and nothing he does not want. On the other hand, the politician must beware of the besetting sin of mere advocacy. He must necessarily say all that can fairly be said for any project or proposal made by his party, but he must not be ready to argue any brief that may be put into his hands, for he is responsible for his arguments in a way that the barrister in court is not responsible. A party should therefore aim, not only at encouraging independent views, but also at digesting them. The policy of a party must be defined by its leaders,

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but should be moulded by all its members. In fact this is the aim of national parties in this country. The evil of the "machine" is probably more present in municipal politics, where divisions follow the line of local interests rather than the line of national parties. Such local machines may obtain an undue influence in a national party if they "represent" an important group of constituencies, but the root of the evil in these cases is local, and must be dealt with locally.

This last point becomes of importance in connection with another difficulty keenly felt by many people; *i.e.* ought a voter to vote for the candidate of his own party if he considers the other candidate a man of higher character? This difficulty only arises where the nomination of candidates is controlled either by a strong local machine representing certain interests, or (a more common case in this country) by a small group of men representing no one but themselves. The trouble is that men and women, even when they belong definitely to a particular party, are reluctant to undertake the drudgery of what may be called "pre-election politics." A party should be so organised locally that every member of it has, by proper representation, a real voice in the selection of a proper candidate, and can prevent the selection of one whose honesty or moral character is in doubt. The many attempts made in America to secure this object by the holding of "primary" elections, or by other devices, have sufficiently demonstrated that the only cure lies in awaking an active sense of responsibility among voters, not merely for the votes they give at elections

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but for the selection of those for or against whom their votes must be cast.

But, with all this to be said for the party system, it needs also to be said that when the system degenerates into what we have called party politics, it does present great difficulties to the Christian.

The party system tends to crystallise that which ought to remain fluid. A party, *e.g.* which quite properly challenges some proposed change, may find itself adopting an undeviating attitude for a whole generation, simply because it maintains its original tradition and outlook. It tends to substitute for thought the self-imposed tyranny of phrases, *e.g.* "My party, right or wrong"; or "The duty of an Opposition is to oppose." It tends to allege principles when it is really representing some tradition or even prejudice.

The duty of the individual Christian to take such a share in politics as may be open to him is not altered by the fact that he will have to take it in and through a party, which, like all social organisations, is a blend of good, bad and indifferent elements. He must form his judgment, and, fully admitting that the judgment of others may be different, seek that, in the political as in every other sphere, the Will of God may be done.

III. THE CHURCH AND PARTIES

The question remains as to the relation of the Church as such to political parties. Ought the Church to take sides? Can it avoid taking sides?

We think it will be admitted that, in matters of

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what used to be called “ high politics,” the Church, as Church, should usually refrain from expressing an opinion. Looking back over the history of foreign policy, for instance, it is clear that the Church could not properly have expressed an opinion as to the desirability of concluding a “ regicide peace ” with France in 1797, or as to the relative advantage of an alliance with France or Germany in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The question whether the Church should take sides is asked to-day, not with reference to such questions, which are the staple of statecraft in every age, but with reference to those problems of “ social policy ” which now bulk so largely in the programmes of every party. The answer to this question is perhaps more simple than is generally supposed. The Church, by its very existence, is committed to the view that all existing social orders are profoundly unsatisfactory in God’s sight. The statement that the law has included all under sin has, perhaps, a wider application than to the Jewish law alone. Every member of the Church is sworn to renounce, not only the flesh and the devil, but also the world. It is a reflection on the Church that she too often finds it necessary to remind members so pledged that Christians cannot tolerate certain social conditions. Of course they cannot, of course they are responsible for finding a remedy, and of course the Church should uphold clear moral principles irrespective of the party by whom they are espoused.

But when it comes to the discussion of particular remedies, the Church has to bear in mind several

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considerations. In the first place, she is commissioned first and foremost to preach the supreme remedy, the spiritual regeneration and redemption of mankind. The promise to her is that, if she has faith to preach the gospel, the signs of power over material things will follow them that believe. Again, she has to consider how far she is herself responsible for certain evils. For instance, we are all impressed to-day with the deterioration of boys and girls over school age owing to continued unemployment, but it may well be asked whether the starting of day continuation schools will suffice to counteract the meagreness of the religious education given in so many of our Church schools. Again, the Church has to consider that, as we have already said, the functions of the State are not unlimited. The family is a divinely appointed institution, no less than the State and the Church, and the human instinct for common action has, in all ages, led to the formation of co-operative communities like the Guild and the Friendly Society, which seem to be more appropriate agencies for certain purposes than the State. Finally, the Church has to consider whether a given problem is one on which bishops or presbyteries can speak authoritatively in virtue of their commission as stewards of the mysteries of God, or one on which her members must seek to represent the views of faithful Christians generally. It is obvious that the Church as a whole, divided as she is, has no representative machinery sufficient to enable her to ascertain and express the views of her members, and there are few denominations taken singly which can claim to have such machinery.

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Even if, after considering all these points, the Church decides that there is a clear case for State action, as distinct from other action, she can hardly claim to be a judge of method. She may decide that the State should make better provision for the aged, though she must at the same time teach the duties of children towards their parents; but she can hardly take sides as between a contributory and a non-contributory scheme of old-age pensions. She should emphatically preach the sin of the slums, but she cannot estimate whether a State subsidy or a tax on land values will encourage or discourage building. Practically every party difference on matters of social reform centres round such questions of method, and behind all such questions lies the central problem of State finance. On this problem the Church as a Church is quite clearly incapable of judging whether an extra shilling on the income tax will or will not increase unemployment, or what are the relative disadvantages of high rates or high taxes in a time of bad trade.

On the whole, the Church's duty is to preach the need for repentance and the promise of redemption, but, if that message is preached with power, it will stir men more effectively than any discussion of particular schemes.

In this connection it is worth remembering that the Church in all ages has borne its distinctive witness largely by tracing social sins to their source in the corrupt affections of the individual human heart. St. James's answer to the question "from whence come wars and fightings among you?" is an instance, and it is at least possible that such first

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principles occupy too small a place to-day in the Church's teaching about social disorders. Real conflicts of interest and opinion do exist in the body politic, but few people have any idea how potent, both in national and international affairs, may be the mental bias of a few individuals, a bias often quite unconnected with the real facts of a given situation. Economic laws do exist, and the Church is not the best interpreter of them ; but the Church's teaching is the only power that can straighten out the curious moral twists about money that often determine political action quite independently of real economic law.

This point of view is put forcibly in certain notes sent to us by the Society of Friends, with which we may fittingly close this section of our Report :

“ 1. In view of a possible tendency in some places to stress the position and authority of the Church, we would emphasise, as Friends always have done, the importance of individual faithfulness. ‘ You cannot make the world better than you are yourself.’

“ 2. A kindred point arises in regard to some deep and difficult problems of theory which are put forward. We do not wish to belittle theoretic discussion, but it may be that some of the difficulties can only be answered by steady following of the light we have. ‘ Be true to the duty that you know. That must be right, whatever else is uncertain.’ We believe that men like George Fox, William Penn and Joseph Sturge—to name a few of our own body only—who have had great social and political influence, owed this chiefly to the fact that they were true to the duty they knew.

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“3. In regard to our attitude to law and legal justice, we have been reminded that ‘law is in the first instance a product of the social conscience. But because it is an attempt to define social obligation, it comes in time to be regarded as stating the sum of social obligation,’ and again, that ‘the beatitudes are countless blessings on those who have ceased to make demands for justice.’

“4. This thought and the whole attitude of Friends towards the use of force prevent us from endorsing certain statements which have been put forward, as to ‘rights’ and ‘compulsion.’ The conception of rights, to mention one point, demands interpretation in the light of a wider and deeper thought. ‘If the early Church,’ it has been said, ‘had put the “Rights of Man” before the “Kingdom of God” in its teaching, slavery would still be universal’ (Canon Hobhouse, *Church and World*, p. 52; Sir Wm. Ramsay, *Expositor*, Nov. 1909, p. 414).”

CHAPTER III

CLASS DIVISIONS IN SOCIETY

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I. THE NATURE OF CLASSES

THE advent of political democracy has not led, and does not of itself seem likely to lead, to an obliteration of class divisions in society. Consequently any analysis of contemporary political structure is unreal which fails to take into account the existence of social classes and the possibility of conflict between them. We have to inquire, then, whether the continuance of such classes is consistent with the ideal of a Christian community; if it is not, how society is to rid itself of them; or, if it is, what changes in their nature and outlook may be expected to result from the application of Christian principles.

It is clear that since the origin and basis of class distinctions is largely an economic one, the subject cannot be fully discussed without an examination of problems which are outside the scope of our inquiry on this occasion. It is noteworthy that, in the school of thought where insistence upon the interdependence of politics and economics is strongest—the Marxian school—a struggle for power between social classes is regarded as supplying both an explanation of past history and a clue to future

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social development. In whatever respects we may differ from this school, we may agree with its exponents at least so far as to recognise that a political theory which neglects the existence of class antagonisms, and the need for resolving them, is blind to a vital element in human affairs.

A class may be defined as being composed of persons having common standards of social conduct, common opportunities of education, and a not widely dissimilar degree of economic power. The existence of classes does not necessarily involve any conscious antagonism between them. Such antagonism is least likely to arise, when it is believed that each class is contributing some necessary service to society; in such cases, classes may be held to have a functional justification. This was, broadly speaking, the position in the best centuries of mediæval Christendom. The estates of the realm each contributed something, as *oratores*, *bellatores*, or *laboratores*, to the welfare of the realm and of each other. Such an idea, it may be noted, is consistent with the widest inequalities of wealth, honour, and station, but *not* with the conception of any spiritual inequality between men of differing classes.

(a) *The Evolution of Contemporary Class Divisions.* —The revolutions of the eighteenth century, carried through in England in the name of industrial progress, and in France in the name of political liberty, had as their result the breakdown of such class barriers as impeded the establishment of plutocracy. They thus reproduced on a national scale a transition which can be traced on a smaller scale in the history

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of mediæval towns, and, notably later, in the Italian city-states at the time of the Renaissance. Whereas Catholic teaching had inclined to lay down the doctrine that a man's wealth should depend upon his state of life, Protestantism in the eighteenth century offered no opposition to the idea that a man's state in life should depend on his wealth. The "bourgeoisie," having deprived the land-owning aristocracy of its monopoly of political power with the assistance of a "democratic" agitation on the part of the masses, formed an alliance with it in order to re-erect the social barriers thus overthrown on a new basis. The mechanic and the labourer were exhorted to be content, not with poverty, but with an inferior social position presumed to be the necessary corollary to poverty, and the growth of the "social reform" movement during the last century has thus too often assumed the character of class legislation. "One law for the rich, and another for the poor" is a principle that we all condemn; but we have in practice assumed that the poor, having small economic power, must be protected, not only against the rich who have such power, but also against themselves. Economic power, being the only power we recognise, has become the test of legislation, and inequalities in economic power have been held to justify benevolent inequalities in law.

Parallel with this tendency to reflect economic divisions in legal formulæ, and to confront the principle of political democracy with a new theory of social caste, has been the effort to organise the

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overthrow of divisions between the classes, by establishing the triumph of one of them. The social revolutionary of the Marxian school has preached "class consciousness" to the "proletariat" as a means, on the one hand, of awakening its members to an awareness of their exclusion from the greater part of modern civilisation, and, on the other, of confirming their determination to establish a new order which shall be based firmly upon their own needs and values, and to eliminate class struggles by reason of the fact that no class is left outside to conduct one. The programme has been—as was to have been expected—the subject of violent controversy ever since it was formulated, and when, some half a dozen years ago, it passed from theory into the realm of practical experiment, the issues it raised were seen by all to be of vital consequence to civilisation.

This is not the place to discuss these issues with the fullness that their importance deserves. It is generally objected from the Christian point of view that, since the social dynamic on which the Marxian depends is hate, nothing true and lasting can come of the experiments which he initiates. This objection, while it has undoubtedly much force, does not seem to us either wholly fair or sufficiently penetrating. That we should hate an evil *system* and the injustice which flows from it, is part of our duty as Christians, and if the Marxian is right in his analysis of the existing order (which it is no part of our purpose here to discuss), he is not wrong in his passion—however violent—to replace it by a new one. Whether the methods he proposes are

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consistent with the building of a noble society, and whether the particular order at which he aims is likely to prove either a just or a stable one—these are the matters in which the Marxian may (and, in our opinion, should) find himself at issue with those who judge social progress from the standpoint of Christian values.

(b) *Where Proletarianism fails.*—So far as our present subject is concerned, we would point out that to make the “proletariat,” *as such*, the criterion and the engine of social change, is in a fundamental sense a surrender to the very values of that plutocracy its champions seek to overthrow. It involves isolation of, and concentration upon the least human and truly normal of all forms of social status, with the result that the “proletariat” being taken as the centre of all, there follows a distortion of everything. The circumference of plutocratic organisation becomes the centre of the new society, but that society is likely in consequence to reproduce much that was most sterile in the old one. It is not as “proletarians” that men, seeking a nobler order, can afford to consider themselves, if they are really to put behind them all that has most blighted the development of personality and true citizenship in the past. Moreover, so complex is our existing system, that it is difficult to give the term “proletariat” any precise connotation, and still more difficult to found any genuine solidarity upon it outside the most restricted circles. The small retailer, the clerk, the technician, even the skilled artisan, while they are certainly excluded for the most part from any control of the social

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process, can scarcely be termed “proletarian” without an undue stretching of the term.

But, finally, it must be questioned whether those social classes to whom leisure, education, and opportunity have so far been most easily accessible, have nothing to contribute to the fashioning of a new society. Their virtual monopoly of culture must assuredly be challenged, and with even greater justice may the use so far made of that monopoly be called in question. We cannot be finally satisfied with any culture which is not, in the best and fullest sense, a democratic culture; we believe that those who have been to so large a degree excluded from the culture of the past have large and vital contributions to make to the culture of the future, not as individuals only, but as a class. But we cannot recognise what has been termed by its protagonists “proletarian culture,” involving as it does a conscious breach of continuity with past traditions, and a concentration upon narrow and often secondary objectives, as providing a true or sufficient basis for the life of a society framed in accordance with the ideal of the Kingdom of God.

There is also danger in exaggerating the “upper class” monopoly of culture, and ignoring the very real dissemination of culture among all classes which has marked the last hundred years. In politics, anyone in search of good English style is perhaps more likely to find it to-day in the speeches of the Labour Party in Parliament than in those of the present generation of Liberals or Conservatives and, indeed, more likely to find it among the trades unionists than among the “intellectuals” of the

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Labour Party. The English and Scottish worker to-day for the most part seeks, not a new culture, but the national culture of which he feels he is the rightful heir ; and it is for those, rich or poor, who have been fortunate enough to enter into that heritage, to assist and lead him in the direction of his desires.

II. THE CLASS PROBLEM A FUNDAMENTAL ONE

Class divisions which give rise to conflict, suspicion, and estrangement between the varying elements in society are clearly alien to the mind of Christ. They cannot but hamper disastrously the development of that sense of a common purpose which must be a distinguishing feature of every community which is framing its corporate life in correspondence with the ideal of the Kingdom of God. But it is useless merely to deplore class divisions, and still more futile to frame our political theories and our social programmes on the assumption that they do not exist, or are of no consequence. It is this sort of attitude which has been largely responsible for the disappointments and disillusion which the experience of political democracy is now creating in so many parts of the civilised world. Class divisions are no accidental feature of a modern society : they are an essential element of its present structure. We have to face this fact ; and when we examine it more closely we must find ourselves unable, either to approve the basis on which those divisions are founded, or to doubt that so long as this basis remains, a proper relationship between

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the different elements that go to compose society is impossible.

We are led, therefore, to inquire what it is that gives “class feeling” its divisive and even anti-social character. That inquiry cannot be pursued far on this occasion, if only because it would involve an invasion of ground entrusted to other Commissions. It must suffice to suggest that just as the feudal privilege and political monopoly enjoyed by the aristocracy were questioned by a “class conscious bourgeoisie” in the social crisis of the eighteenth century, even so are the “economic privilege and cultural monopoly” of the upper strata of modern society challenged to-day by a large body of those who hold themselves unjustly excluded therefrom. To examine the precise degree of justification for this grievance would involve a long inquiry which is impossible here, and is, in any case, no part of our present task. But this much at least is clear to us. If means can be found by which this sense of economic injustice can be gradually, but not slowly, dissipated; if a culture (using that term in its widest connotation) can be steadily developed which is not merely accessible to the masses of the people, but to which they themselves are able directly to contribute, we shall be on the way to overcome the most considerable obstacles to a free and united society which now confront mankind. To work towards such objects, then, is not merely a praiseworthy hobby for the individual Christian; it is a compelling obligation laid upon the whole Church, and upon every one of its children as an “inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Christian citizenship

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is not exhausted in the fulfilment of secular duties : it demands a readiness for sacrifice, for study, for devotion and love without which the obstacles to which we have alluded are never likely to be overcome.

Any movement for obliterating the evils flowing from class divisions must necessarily be a movement towards equality. This may not necessarily involve an identity of station or remuneration for every citizen in the community. But it must certainly aim at something more and something other than the "equality of opportunity" which, in the past, has all too often been regarded as a sufficient goal for democracy. For this still leaves us with the question — "opportunity for what ?" The opportunity, which modern plutocracies have often prided themselves on offering to those determined to avail themselves of it, is an opportunity to join the ranks of those who bear power therein. But to this it has to be objected, first, that this involves merely the emergence of a particular type of ability, and not a specially exalted one ; secondly, that the defects from which societies suffer are not to be cured or even mitigated by any increase in the area from which its controllers are drawn, while the standards prevailing therein remain the same ; and, finally, that the triumphant careers of successful individuals neither alter nor allay the grievances of those whom they leave behind in the same position as before. It is not the opportunity to excel others which we need to universalise ; it is the opportunity for every man to find in his work a true sense of vocation and a real experience of fraternity, without

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feeling himself sundered by arbitrary barriers from his fair share of the resources of civilisation.

Political democracy will never fulfil its promises until it is united to a social order in which opportunity is based in no way upon economic power, but is the heritage of all. In such an order "functional" organisations would doubtless supply fresh nuclei to replace the "class-conscious" solidarities of to-day; social differentiation would become, as it were, vertical rather than horizontal; and though this tendency might bring its own problems in its train, they would not involve the bitter conflicts and estrangements which our contemporary class divisions render almost inevitable. It is no doubt true that much that we associate with "class distinctions" will persist under any such re-arrangement of society for a considerable time, but such distinctions will lose the atmosphere of hostility and bitterness which to-day hangs round them. In equal service and common devotion to a single social purpose men of widely differing functions and experiences will know themselves as brothers not in dim aspiration, but in a living reality.

CHAPTER IV
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ST. PAUL had his local patriotism. Not only did he claim to be a Roman born, but also “a citizen of no mean city.” Our Lord Himself, in tears over Jerusalem, expressed His love, not only for the city of God, but for the city whose good every Jew sought “for his brethren and companions’ sakes.” Among all the social groups to which we belong, there are few that have greater power to kindle an affectionate pride than our own town, or it may be our village, and the region of which it makes part. This is not merely a man’s environment ; it is a real part of his life. It is a society which, like other societies, produces an organisation to serve its own ends, and the service of which should make a specially strong appeal to the Christian, who, as such, must care for the good of his neighbours, and of the society of which he forms a part.

I. THE SPHERE FOR SERVICE

The sphere for service offered by local government is very wide. In our own country, it is no question even of administration alone, important as that is. Local self-government is a tradition on which we pride ourselves, and there is a considerable area within which there is scope for differing policies, so

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that the locality can determine for itself the lines of its development, and the extent of the services—for health, for amenity, for education—which it will directly offer to its citizens, and incidentally also, of course, the extent of the claims it will make for communal purposes on their private incomes. Then there is the administration itself. According as this is strong or weak, penny wise or pound foolish, disinterested or subject to the pull of interests or parties, will the community be well or badly served. The member of a local Council may often feel that administrative detail is dull and petty, and that there is little in it about which he differs from his colleagues, and consequently little difference made by his presence or absence. But if he takes a wider view, and notes the change of atmosphere when certain representatives are present or absent, he will begin to realise truths about group-psychology, and the committee-mind and its reflex influence on the mind of officers and officials.

A great deal of disinterested and public-spirited service is given in municipal and county administration. The rarity of serious corruption in English local government nowadays is a testimony to that fact. The appearance of Civic Leagues, Citizens' Associations and the like, having for their purpose the visualisation of the life of their town as a whole, the pressing of its needs on the bodies responsible, and the finding of suitable candidates for such bodies, is a wholesome symptom. Probably a great deal of the service offered in all these ways is that of men and women whose ideals and character have been formed by Christian influences. And because

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individuals fail to work out their philosophies consistently and to label themselves correctly, we do not expect to find any line of cleavage perceptible between the good citizen who is a professing Christian, and the good citizen in general.¹ But it is a little disquieting that, even now, the average member of the average congregation does not feel the responsibility of citizenship laid upon his conscience as part of his Christian duty.

II. CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

The average professing Christian has either never troubled to think about these things at all, sharing with about fifty per cent. of his fellow-citizens an apathy that keeps him from the poll, based on an ignorance about the functions of Borough, District, and County Councils and Boards of Guardians, an apathy that is deep and almost impenetrable. There are still some who cherish a sense of their spiritual superiority in ignoring such "merely secular" activities. The average Christian has yet to be made to see that either all life is spiritual,

¹ While in the short run, or over any given horizontal section of society, we may not find that the degrees of good citizenship manifested by individuals vary according to their differing creeds, in the long run, or across any given vertical sections of society, we shall find such correspondences. Japan of the future, for instance, will certainly develop differently according as Japan becomes or does not become a Christian nation. Central Africa will be different according to the result of the present struggle between Christianity and Mohammedanism there. And England will also be different according as Christianity is or is not her dominant creed.

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or none of it ; and that his religion is most imperfectly expressed if it dominates his individual relationships only, and not his social relationships also. In short, what has already been said about the responsibility of citizenship applies to local as well as to national and international citizenship. Christian public opinion needs to be a much stronger force than it is in discovering and developing vocations to local government. It is for this reason that we think such bodies as Christian Social Service centres, or Interdenominational Social Councils, are valuable. The Christian needs to be made to feel his responsibility as a Christian, and to realise the poverty of a merely individualistic interpretation of Christianity. Also, he needs opportunity for bringing these things into the atmosphere of prayer.

If such bodies as these Interdenominational Councils are therefore to justify themselves, they must have strong bases in their constituent churches and congregations. If every congregation ought to have its study-circles and probably its committee at work on the general problems of politics, so certainly these should also deal with current local problems.

The work of such organisations will, of course, need to be done in the Christian spirit : that is, they must not merely or chiefly denounce evil, but encourage good. There is a tendency, from which many professing Christians are not free, to criticise loudly enough whatever they may dislike in the policy of any local body, whether it be its rash expenditure of money, or its apparent toleration of social evils, while they fail actively to support policies of which

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they approve. As a matter of mere common sense, it may be observed that mere criticism from outsiders, and often from outsiders who know little about the difficulties under which a public authority may labour, is often naturally resented. The more practical way in which to go to work would be, first, to get into touch with the officials for information as to what is being done, then with friendly members of the authority in question as to what might be done, and then, if necessary, to put forward by correspondence or by deputation fairly detailed suggestions. Co-operation of this sort is often quite useful, and is sometimes even welcomed. For, as a rule, the members of such authorities will be very conscious of the pull of the ratepayer, and sometimes the pull of private interests; but they seldom feel the inspiration of a pull from Christian public opinion.

Again, opportunities for co-operation in detail are often missed. Church workers, for example, are still to be found who will supplement from Church funds what they feel to be inadequate poor relief, but never concern themselves with the way in which the guardians administer such relief.¹ They will visit insanitary and overcrowded dwellings constantly, but regard it as none of their business to report such things to the Medical Officer of Health. It is true that there would be some difficulty in so doing, because an improvement forced on the landlord by the authorities may mean an increase of rent to the tenant, who, if he suspects the Church visitor of being concerned in the matter, will

¹ We deal further with this question in Chapter VI., *q.v.*

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probably shut the door in his face at his next visit. But here, again, a Christian public opinion on the duties of owners of house-property, and a wholesome curiosity as to the ownership, would often be extremely useful. The dwellers in the houses know, if the pastor does not, when their landlord is a pillar of the Church. Failures such as these are chiefly due to want of thought. Others are due to want of knowledge, as when a Club worker may hear again and again of bad conditions—inadequate heating, for example, or unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation—and may see its bad effects on the health or mind of girls or boys, and yet have no idea that the thing could be remedied at once by means of a letter to the Town Hall or to the Home Office, as the case may be. In Chapter VI of this Report we suggest the kind of information every citizen ought to take the trouble to get, in order that he may see the things that are before his eyes, and take action in consequence.

Two real difficulties stand in the way of the realisation of the conception of the duty of a Christian as a local citizen here suggested. First, behind that hesitation of which we have spoken above, which the Christian often genuinely feels at mixing himself up with these “merely secular” activities, lies a sense that anything less than a personal relationship is sub-Christian. But to take part in the work of government involves the merging of a personal responsibility for action in a corporate responsibility; and this is more fully felt in work in the comparatively small local sphere where persons are realised as individuals, not merged in

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statistics. The Christian feels that he would more properly aim at converting the landlord than at putting the sanitary law into effect ; or that, seeing a brother or sister in need, he is not doing the right thing in merely taking a fractional share of responsibility for some relief scale, or other form of assistance which will include this particular case. If he acts on this view, however, he ignores the reality of corporate life and corporate responsibility ; and the Church needs to preach more insistently that these too are spheres of Christian opportunity.

The other difficulty is one we have already dealt with in general, but it, too, is specially felt in the sphere of local government. It is the party system. Practically, in most places and for most people, it is difficult to get a footing in public life except through backing of one or other political party. It used to be commonly argued that there was no proper place for the political party in local government ; that the party machines only came into the matter because local government gave them a convenient method for keeping themselves in touch with the constituencies ; and that self-respecting candidates ought to stand as Independents. Even in those days this was easier said than done. Some organisation is necessary to find and introduce and run a candidate ; it is not easy to create it each time *ad hoc* ; and what has been said before as to the advantage of a party representing a general attitude of mind over some small group having some special interest, holds good in this field as well as on the larger scale. We think also that it will be generally agreed that, at the present day, the general attitude of the political

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parties respectively is relevant to local government so far as the choice of policy is concerned. It is true that administration forms a very large part of local government, and that there is, therefore, more scope for the independent candidate, or for a choice irrespective of party, in local than in national politics. And in administrative matters there should be, and commonly is, forgetfulness of party attachments among the members of a local authority. But, generally speaking, we should apply to local politics what we have already said of national politics, as to the duty of sharing in the work of party organisation, not leaving it on one side as a thing unpleasant if not unclean. Here, too, the battles of the Lord can be fought.

CHAPTER V
CHRISTIANITY AND THE PRESS

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE PRESS

THE word “Press” is here used to denote the newspaper, and not periodical literature generally. It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss “the religious Press” or the space devoted to “ecclesiastical news” in the “secular” Press. The subject for consideration is the function of the newspaper in society from the Christian point of view. The discussion is confined to the British situation, though the general principles, so far as they are true at all, should be equally applicable to any newspaper.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRESS

It is probably true to say that the newspaper is the most influential educational factor in the adult life of the country, especially if Sunday papers are included. The pulpit and the platform have not lost their power, and wireless broadcasting is a new force with which to reckon, but they reach effectively only a fraction of the population. The reading public, so far as books are concerned, is a minority, even if a most influential one. But the Press reaches everybody and dwarfs even the cinema in importance.

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It is an axiom that one cannot legislate—to any useful purpose at any rate—far in advance of public opinion. And public opinion is shaped by the Press. It is only the exceptional man who reads his paper with critical detachment and preserves a balanced judgment. It is their daily paper that determines the attitude of the mass of men and women towards current events, national and international. They have no other source of information. Upon its evidence their collective decisions, especially in times of crisis, are almost entirely based. If those who control our newspapers set their opinions above the truth they are destroying the foundations upon which our political life is based. Democracy is built upon sand if it is denied access to the facts. “Whether we like it or not, the greatest power in England, in certain times of crisis at least, is outside constitutional control. A few newspaper proprietors come nearer, at just those junctures which are crucial, really to governing England and making it what it is, than Commons or Cabinet, Church or Trade Union” (Angell, *The Press and the Organisation of Society*, p. 25).

There are, of course, those who maintain that the newspaper has little formative effect on the public mind. The policy of the newspaper is simply to say for the average man what he is unable to express. “Exactly what I’ve been thinking all the time,” he says, and finding that the leader-writer expresses his own opinion, he is naturally convinced that the writer is undeniably an able man. The views of the newspaper, so it is argued, are only a reflection of what men are thinking at the moment. Until

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the time is ripe no amount of Press guidance will achieve anything. The journalist can only catch glimpses of how the public mind is working, and record with what insight he has the trend of opinion.

But this argument is more plausible than true. The grain of truth it contains is that the Press could not suddenly induce the nation, or even an individual, to accept views in violent contradiction to those currently held. Its power is limited, and the conversion of public opinion must needs be a slow process. But "the average man" can form no opinion without at least some facts to go upon. It is the Press which selects and presents the facts, and in so doing almost inevitably, whether unconsciously or of design, colours them. Editorial policy affects "news" as well as leaders. It decides what is to go in, and where. This guidance of opinion through news is the more insidious in that it is seldom suspected.

Further, even with the facts before him, the average man has no "opinion" until it is expressed either by himself or by someone else for him. One might say that he has several potential opinions. It is possible for a speaker or a writer to appeal to his "better self" or to trade upon his lower instincts. For good or for evil, more often than not he will accept the formulated ready-made opinion of his paper as his own.

Taking it for granted, then, that the power of the Press over public opinion is of vital moment to those who are concerned for the building of a nobler order of society, let us examine the function of the Press

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ideally, and the present-day difficulties in the way of such functioning.

II. THE IDEAL PAPER

The ideal paper would be first and foremost a *news* paper. It would provide information as impartial and accurate as human fallibility would allow on all kinds of questions, great and small, which were of general concern or interest to the community. In matters of moment where the "facts" were at issue and opinion divided, as, for example, in a miners' strike, the paper would state both sides impartially. While not above reporting affairs of human interest, but of little importance, it would take care by the allocation of space and in other ways to preserve a proper sense of proportion in itself and its readers, and not encourage trivialities to dominate the public mind if issues of real moment were at stake.

In recording crime or sordid happenings, it would observe a wise reticence, and while outspoken when the welfare of the society so demanded, would never pander to the baser appetites of humanity in order to increase its circulation.

The ideal paper might still contain "propaganda." It might be controlled by a man or group of men with certain convictions as to the policy which the State should pursue in the national interest. They would use their paper as a means of stating their case. But being honest men, they would be scrupulously careful to distinguish between the recording of facts and the presentation of arguments.

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The news columns would be impartial, however vigorous the leading article.

In times of international crisis, the paper would exercise a restraining influence upon public passion, and help the nation to "keep its head" while a just solution was being sought for the dispute.

In addition to news and opinion on public issues, the paper would, of course, chronicle the lighter side of life, and cater for the interests of its readers in sport, in literary and dramatic criticism, and so forth. Honesty is not synonymous with dullness. While there is much in modern advertising that is wasteful or dishonest, there will still be advertisement in Utopia. The ideal paper might still draw the greater part of its income from advertisements, but it would no more think of allowing the advertiser to control its policy than a judge would of taking a bribe to deflect the course of justice.

The ideal paper, in short, would pride itself upon its accuracy, fair-mindedness, and devotion to the public good.

III. THE PRESENT SITUATION

It is not for a moment suggested that such ideals are not those of many journalists, or that there are not papers which seek to approximate to such a standard and more or less succeed. But such journalists are the first to recognise how far the Press as a whole falls short. Let us attempt to state some of the difficulties of the present situation from the point of view of the ideal.

It is all important to realise, in the first place, that

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though as a matter of fact the Press is a great educational force for good or for evil, it is not primarily conducted as such, but as a commerical undertaking, in which circulation is the measure of success. There is, of course, nothing wrong in the desire for circulation in itself. The more an editor or a business manager believed in his paper as an educational agency, the keener he would become to promote its circulation. But though "circulation" is a good servant, it is clearly a bad master. Justifiable as a means, it ought not to be an end.

The modern newspaper is a great industrial enterprise demanding a large capital, supplied by investors who seek a return for their money. It is clearly as legitimate a field for investment as, say, soap or cotton. It is also a highly competitive industry, in which it is easy to be put out of business by a rival who catches the public taste more effectively. The editor is a trustee for the property of the shareholders; he is under obligation to earn dividends. How far is he justified in jeopardising the property of others for his convictions? In any case, if he loses his circulation the paper becomes valueless even to the cause for which he has sacrificed it.

It is often said that the newspapers are the servants of "capital" and dominated by "big business." It is certainly true that the controlling interest in most of them is owned by those who are large shareholders in other industries. There can be little doubt that newspapers are sometimes consciously employed to further other ends. For example, take this statement made on behalf of the Official Receiver in connection with the compulsory liquida-

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tion of the *Globe* Newspaper Co., Ltd., in 1921:—
“The company was registered in June, 1920, to acquire the *Globe*. It was promoted by a London Bank to use the paper as an advertising medium for industrial concerns in which the bank was interested” (*Times*, July 28, 1921). In Lord Rhondda’s *Life* it is also definitely stated, in his own words, that the attraction of newspaper-owning for him, and he was substantially interested in several, was as a subsidiary to his economic interests in other businesses.

None the less, it is probably true that the “big business” which dominates most newspapers, is the newspaper business itself. All else is subsidiary to the securing of circulation. It is only rarely that a paper is the deliberate tool of other interests, at any rate in England. It is said that in some other countries the case is different.

The power of the advertiser should not be forgotten in this connection. It is the advertisement columns that really pay for the paper. Lord Beaverbrook estimates that the revenue from advertising in London newspapers totals £13,000,000 a year (*Newspaper World*, May 20, 1922). But advertising follows circulation. Once a paper has built up its circulation, it will probably get its advertisements, whatever its policy. None the less, the advertising manager cannot afford to be indifferent to the opinions expressed to him by powerful advertising interests, and pressure on the editorial policy is a not unlikely result. Certainly it would be very difficult for a paper to get successfully launched if it stood for a policy which the great advertising firms considered inimical to their interests.

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But the all-controlling quest for circulation is apt to create evils as serious as subordination to other economic interests.

The journalist, as a business man in charge of a valuable concern, fighting every day a fierce competitive struggle, is inevitably tempted to take the line of least resistance to securing readers. It is not always easy to "make righteousness readable," as one paper has been honourably credited with doing. Pickles are said to form too large a part of the diet of the over-tired East-Ender. The evening paper in its effort to appeal to the wearied City worker is prone at times to offer unwholesome but stimulating food for the jaded palate. For such matter, we are told, the mass of the public has an untiring appetite. If one paper supplies this kind of diet, all others have to follow. "It is not a question about which it is worth while moralising. . . . It is not possible to dictate to your public, and the only choice open to anyone who is obstinate on questions of taste is to appeal to a narrow public of a better class against the more common preferences of the multitude" (Dibblee, *The Newspaper*, p. 39). Certain Sunday newspapers in particular are notorious for their supply of garbage.

It has been said above that the reader brings several potential opinions to his paper. But these opinions are not all equally easily or pleasantly brought to the surface. It is easier to rouse passion against the "bolshevism" of the striker or the "profiteering" of the "capitalist" than to lead the public to form a dispassionate judgment of the rights and wrongs of the dispute. The paper which

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ran counter to the surface prejudices of its readers would offer an opening to its rivals anxious to capture its circulation. It is more profitable to tell the public the lie it likes than the truth that is unpleasant. "In war-time," said Dr. Johnson, "a people only wants to hear two things—good ~~of~~ of themselves and evil of the enemy." The less reputable newspapers exploit the psychology of the crowd rather than create it. They give the public "what it wants," but they make it want what they give it. It is one more of the "vicious circles" familiar to the student of social affairs. Public opinion creates the Press: the Press is apt to stress the worst in public opinion. "It is impossible to deny," writes one observer, himself a journalist, "that the recent commercialisation of journalism is an irredeemable loss to this country" (*Dibblee, The Newspaper*, p. 110).

Dr. Johnson's dictum just quoted is unfortunately not true only in war-time. The desire to hear other countries disparaged in comparison with one's own, the readiness to believe the worst about the foreigner, is widely prevalent at all seasons. Patriotism, love of country, is too often conceived as having as its converse the dislike or hatred of others. A curious blend of the good and bad of the patriotism of the "man in the street," and its reflection in his papers, is to be found in the declaration of the *Daily Mail* on its fourth anniversary, at the time of the Boer War be it remembered.

"People have sought to explain our progress by many reasons. The main cause is that the *Daily Mail* is the embodiment and mouthpiece of the

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Imperial idea. Those who launched this journal had one definite aim in view. It was, and is, to be the articulate voice of British progress and domination. We believe in England. We know that the advance of the Union Jack means protection for the weaker races, justice for the oppressed, liberty for the downtrodden. Our Empire has not yet exhausted itself. Great tasks lie before it, great responsibilities have to be borne. It is for the power, the greatness, the supremacy of this Empire that we have stood. In the heart of every Englishman has dawned the consciousness that a still greater destiny awaits us."

Such a programme as interpreted by not a few of our papers has not always made for the international understanding and brotherhood of the Kingdom of God. It is not unfair to say that the glorification of a selfish nationalism is the deliberate policy of most of our newspapers. What is even worse is that they would accept such a charge as a compliment. And the people love to have it so.

In his book, *Liberty and the News*, Walter Lippmann, the American publicist, writes vigorously, yet with substantial truth, of the opportunities presented to the unscrupulous journalist in the realm of international relations: "If I lie in a lawsuit involving the fate of my neighbour's cow, I can go to jail. But if I lie to a million readers in a matter involving war and peace, I can lie my head off, and, if I choose the right series of lies, be entirely irresponsible. Nobody will punish me if I lie about Japan, for example. I can announce that every Japanese valet is a reservist, and every Japanese store a mobilisation

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centre. I am immune. And if there should be hostilities with Japan, the more I lied the more popular I should be. If I asserted that the Japanese secretly drank the blood of children, that Japanese women were unchaste, that the Japanese were really not a branch of the human race after all, I guarantee that most of the newspapers would print it eagerly, and that I should get a hearing in churches all over the country. And all this for the reason that the public, when it is dependent on testimony and protected by no rules of evidence, can act only on the excitement of its pugnacities and its hopes" (*op. cit.*, p. 39). One of the most important aims Christians must work for in order to make human brotherhood possible is a truthful news service. Truly to interpret the life and ideas of the nations to one another is in itself an essentially Christian thing.

One of the most difficult moral problems for the journalist is the extent to which he is justified in advocating the policy of the newspaper by which he is employed, when it runs contrary to his own convictions. It is argued by some that the newspaper is impersonal, and that in unsigned matter the private opinions of the writer have nothing to do with the case. The barrister does not suffer in character by being able to maintain the side for which he is briefed. The position of the journalist, it is maintained, is the same.

None the less, this problem has often become acute under the commercial conditions of the modern newspaper. A paper may pass into the hands of a new proprietor who has acquired it with the intention of changing its politics. Cases have not

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infrequently occurred where such a change has led to the resignation of their posts by a large proportion of the editorial staff. Lord Morley once commented on this feature of the journalist's life, and declared that in consequence of it he had never felt able to advise a young man to adopt journalism as a career.

The tendency of news and propaganda to become confused has already been noted. The journalist who deliberately falsified the facts in order to support his case would be as unpleasant as a scientist who "cooked" the results of his experiments to make them correspond with his theories; it is just plain dishonesty. But the trouble is seldom as crude or obvious as that. For a large part of its news, the paper is dependent upon the great news-distributing agencies; they exert a selective and colouring influence upon the material they supply. Even where the news is gathered by its own reporter, there is the temptation to record what will please the paper. It is difficult, some would say impossible, with all the honest intentions in the world, to be an impartial recorder. When the news has reached the paper, the decision has to be taken between one item of news and another. To exclude news unfavourable to one's opinions, or to condense it into a paragraph in a corner, is a not unnatural inclination. Great is the power of the "suppress," as Lord Northcliffe once called it. The distribution of emphasis in news, its position and headlines, make all the difference to its effect on the reader. Thus naturally enough the policy of the paper expresses itself, even if unconsciously, in the news columns.

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Statements are unsuspectingly accepted by the reader as plain facts, which have in reality run the gauntlet of three or four possible distortions ; and he is led insensibly to the formation of an opinion. Whether the policy of the paper is honesty and impartiality, or the determination “to see that the Whig dogs get the worst of it,” it has influence on the “ facts ” it records. The power of the paper over opinion is probably more effectually exerted through its presentation of news than through its leading articles.

The case against the Press as we know it to-day is well summarised by Mr. Norman Angell, in his book *The Press and the Organisation of Society* :

“ In a civilisation increasingly complex and difficult to manage, demanding not only a rising level of intelligence but of character—the capacity to discipline certain instincts which undisciplined become anti-social and destructive—newspapers are compelled, for the profits which are the condition of their existence, increasingly to appeal to the most easily aroused interests of readers ; to pander to the instincts and emotions that can be most rapidly excited, to the “ first ” instead of the “ second ” thought, irrespective of the social outcome of the tendency or temper thus created. Since the most rapidly aroused emotion is often the most anti-social, and the first thought as opposed to the second, a prejudice, this competitive process sets up a progressive debasement of the public mind and judgment ; of that capacity to decide wisely and truly which is, in the last resort, the thing upon which the well-working of society must depend ” (p. 23).

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The word “compelled” may perhaps be questioned, but broadly this judgment penetrates to the root of the trouble. We must not, of course, be taken as asserting that all newspapers are equally guilty of thus following the line of least resistance, still less as making an attack upon journalists as a body. Many of them are aware of and deplore these tendencies as much as any outside critic. The Press is not isolated; it is a part and an expression of our present-day social order. Journalists, like us all, are in the grip of a system. Nor would it be hard to eulogise the positive indispensable services of the Press, even in its present imperfect state, to society and all good causes. If the evils have been dwelt upon it is only that men and women of good-will may be helped to co-operate with the journalist in cleansing the Press of all that militates against its highest usefulness.

IV. THE WAY OF ADVANCE

If the Press is but the reflection of the public mind, and we have seen that to some extent that it is so, clearly the public must share the blame for its shortcomings. Here, as always in seeking a way of advance for society, we come back to *education*. The school, in which we include here the educational activities of the Christian Church, might play a large part in mending matters by the creation of a public which will *not* want the sordid and the sensational, which will have a truer view of patriotism, which will prefer to think of those things that are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, and of good

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report. All that makes for healthier living in society, in housing, temperance, industrial conditions, will also make for a healthier Press.

Upon *the newspaper owner or shareholder*, as upon all shareholders, rests the responsibility of considering the spiritual balance sheet of the business at least as carefully as the financial dividend. The contents and policy of a paper can never be regarded by a Christian man as if it were a non-moral issue, merely from the point of view of circulation. The Press should be as free as the Pulpit from the domination of money.

As a praiseworthy illustration of the recognition by a newspaper proprietor of his public responsibilities, reference may be made to Major Astor's proposals regarding the future of *The Times*. They may be given in his own words. "The power of the newspaper proprietor, for good or ill, is very great and is not diminishing. Therefore, it is quite easy to understand the alarm that is so frequently expressed on this score, and particularly in regard to the increasing consolidation of Press combinations now manifest in this country. People question whether it is right that in these democratic days any one man should exercise an authority apparently so vast and uncontrolled. . . . Ought there not, it is asked, to be some restriction upon the power of mere money to purchase, or of the individual to dispose as he chooses of rights which so directly affect the community? . . . Quite apart, however, from the question of legislative restrictions, there is excellent reason for every newspaper proprietor treating himself as a trustee for interests

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broader and higher than his own. Thus, at any rate, Mr. John Walter and the writer have come to regard their own position, and have, in consequence, agreed to conditions upon their otherwise unfettered power to dispose of their interests in *The Times*. . . . Those who are to be proprietors in the future should at least satisfy a competent tribunal that, as men, they are fitted for their responsibilities. To this end it is being provided in the case of *The Times* that no person shall hereafter acquire an interest in its controlling shares unless with the approval of a body of trustees to be chosen from among the occupants of certain exalted positions in the community" ("The Future of *The Times*," in the *Empire Review*, September, 1923).

Upon us all as *newspaper readers* lies the obligation to support those papers which seek to uphold a higher ideal, as against those that pander to the baser side of human nature. More might be done to convince all papers of the interest and appeal of the better kind of "news." In this connection it is encouraging to know of the work of the Missionary Press Bureau in supplying material dealing truly and sympathetically with the life of other nations and races, and of the warm response and increasing receptivity of the daily papers to its efforts. (See "Missions and the Press" by Basil Matthews, *International Review of Missions*, July, 1923, p. 389.)

There is probably very little that *the State* could do, beyond its present powers relating to obscenity, libel, etc. Certainly any attempt to interfere with the freedom of the Press, even with the best inten-

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tions, would almost infallibly create more evils than it cured. There is, however, some evidence that legislation intended to restrict the publication of details of divorce court proceedings would be welcomed by the better class of newspaper as a protection against the unfair competition of less scrupulous rivals, no less than by a large section of the public.

The power of *the advertiser* has been emphasised, and he can at least refrain from attempting to exert an unhealthy influence upon policy. Something too could be done by the refusal to use the columns of papers of an unhealthy tone, however large their circulation.

The demands upon *the journalist* have been largely dealt with in discussing the ideal newspaper. The journalistic profession might be second to none in honourable public usefulness, if its standards of professional conduct could be raised to the level of those of its finest members to-day. It should have a status like that of law or medicine in society. Good reporting requires the exercise of the highest scientific virtues in the weighing of evidence. The journalist should take the telling of the truth as seriously as the judge takes the exercise of his functions.

Indeed it has recently been suggested in more than one quarter that it would be desirable to create a service of public information on a similar footing to the judiciary. Side by side with private enterprise in journalism, and, in no sense as a monopoly, there should be set up, it is urged, a journalistic service paid by the State, but, like the judiciary,

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independent of political control, pledged to tell the truth as the judge is to administer justice. Such a service with a high professional code and pride, in a position of complete economic independence and security, might achieve much. At any rate, such a proposal merits the most thorough consideration. The interests at stake are as important to the State as justice and public health.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE DUTY OF SOCIAL SERVICE

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THERE is a fear before men, even of optimistic temperament, to-day as they contemplate the new democracy throughout the world. It is the spectre of a world ruled by mechanical forces for material ends, of an ever-increasing momentum of the masses, urged on by forces out of their own control. Haunted by this fear a new culture of creativeness and spontaneity is being taught. Personality, initiative, and the unique value of the human being are the rediscovery of the time.

It has thus come about that this age, uninterested as it is in theological argument, irresponsible in its tolerance of partial expressions of intellectual conceptions of truth, is yet an age to which the actual life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ makes an irresistible appeal. The new psychological teaching on instinct, the greater appreciation of poetry and music, the new sense of spiritual destitution in a mechanically framed universe, have prepared the young of this generation to receive as a new and poignant experience the certainty, beauty and simplicity of the human life of our Lord.

It is this seeking, as for the light itself, which is the significant challenge to Christians within the churches. There are men and women everywhere

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who have rediscovered the uniqueness of the indivisible person, facing and responding to and growing in and through his environment, yet remaining a spiritual entity over against the universe, conscious of his relationship as of a son to a Father, and so in essential fellowship with his kind. They find that this lay as an open secret before our Lord, and that it was the very source of His inspiration and the burden of His Message.

The relevance of this new emphasis to the great social difficulties of our time is a matter which vitally concerns us all. It forms the basis of our urgent appeal to this generation to take its full share in social service.

It is well to be quite clear that the matter we are dealing with in this chapter is not primarily a matter of government; not even, primarily, of economics, but essentially a matter of social and spiritual relationships, of the thoughts and actions of particular men and women, acting in and through communities. When we speak of "social problems" we are simply emphasising relationships: when we consider individuals we are isolating them from the group life of which they form part. Then our duty to society becomes the contribution of each member to all the others—the obligation is one of personal responsibility and the motive force is individual loving-kindness.

If this is true, it is useless to argue that social problems are alien to the travail of the Christian spirit. The great hunger of men for the "human ends," as the only ends worth the struggle in the modern world, is the supreme opportunity for the

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Christian to weave into the pattern of the fabric of society the living image of our Master.

This age, then, has a definite criterion for social experiments. Its test can be put thus: How far are the true ends of personality hindered or reinforced by this or that measure? Thus the ends of government itself become the continued approximations towards social harmony as between live persons in a group: not the fictitious persons of an abstract law which has become an end in itself. Then the limits of government become the inevitable limits, whatever they may be, of the ability of authority, as authority, to create initiative and discover new reaches of personality.

The problem of the breaking up of the mere mass, the abstract voter, which is now the unsolved riddle of democracy, becomes the problem of recognition of various group personalities within the State: that is, groups and regroupings of men and women living in relation to one another, who discover, share, and reshape their individual lives in the larger personality of the whole.

The same principle holds when we examine the actual cases of social perplexity with which we are all faced to-day—such difficulties as unemployment, the shortage of houses, the inadequate resources for leisure time in our great cities, the accretions of property in few hands, the impersonality of industry, the redemption of social offenders, the nurture of the young and the protection of “young persons.”

For the great social questions generally meet men first as personal problems, and it is well that it should

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be so. If they are met first in the mass, in statistics and abstractions, they lose half their poignancy.

I. UNEMPLOYMENT

The problem of unemployment is met in the young brother or sister in the family who is seeking work and the community has no use for him. That is the challenge that first sets one thinking. Or, it is met only too familiarly in the arrival at one's door of a collarless man, with sunken cheeks and the indefinable sense of shame that pervades him, as he asks for assistance for his wife and his children. His resources, even his last personal resource of self-confidence, are all gone. Hasty remedies prove no cure. More of such men arrive and the problem appears hopeless. It is the apparent hopelessness of the problem that drives some sensitive people to avoid it, and not to see at all the spectre of it at every street corner. But it is this which drives the more serious-minded to probe for the causes of the disease which appear manifest to the eye. They learn to move from the particular to the general. The faulty organisation of industry, the distribution of population, the war, the Ruhr, the state of Central Europe, the downfall of Germany, the National Debt, these are the great causes which emerge. The picture of the unemployed ever before one's eyes influences decisions at the polls, influences one's views of local authorities, plunges a man into the whole network of party politics and local administration. This Christian principle of the essential dignity of the human being will provide the neces-

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sary sense of direction. "Work, not doles," "insurance, not relief"—these phrases take on meaning and set the community hunting for true remedies. In the meantime (and this is a burning question to-day) there are thousands of children leaving our schools. They are cast forth from the discipline to which they are used, and thrown on a community that has no use for them. This army of young people are "the unemployed" who have never known employment—the future ne'er-do-wells who waste the two precious years of their life unlearning effectually at the street corner what they learnt at school, and arriving at the age of sixteen in the category of the unemployable.

II. HOUSING

The housing difficulty is another burning social question. It is met by those who are forced to try to solve it by being overcrowded themselves at home, and undertaking that weary tramp for weeks and months seeking a house or even rooms to let. These are the reformers whose bitterness at last makes itself heard. But if one is spared that, it is well to have as one's friends a family forced to sleep six in a bed in the living-room, with another family in the next room sharing with them the back kitchen and the cooking stove. This drives a thinking man into studying the question first hand. This is the sting which has driven Christians to consider schemes of housing and town planning—garden suburbs, clearing of slums. It remains the continual reminder of the urgency of the problem. The babe

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in the family dies, and the next child grows up rickety or consumptive, and the bigger boys and girls grow coarsened and unsensitive to the normal issues of their own lives. The belief of the Christian that the personality, the very seat of spiritual life, is being injured, moves him on and on to a lifework of toil at bricks and mortar to the taunts of those religious people who have never seen the true relationship between environment and spiritual growth. It is the bearing the burden oneself, either in the pain of the imagination, or in the physical discomfort and disgust of the actual contact, that rouses a man to action.

The poverty of the imaginations of men set only on the production of wealth is the cause of the meanness of the great cities of our time, and it will be the associated work of those whose spirit has been reawakened, though still doomed to dwell in them, which will help the next generation to build a fairer house of life.

III. LEISURE

Or let us consider the great problem of the new leisure of our working people, and the profound importance of filling it with things honest and of good report; more opportunities for appreciating great and good literature and art, more chance of creative work and recreative play, a truer sense of our great heritage from the past. When we learn to measure this need we are faced with the present commercialisation of all places of amusement and all forms of recreation.

Young teachers, artists, and lovers of music would

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be doing the greatest service to their generation were they to turn their imagination to the poverty of soul in our great cities and set themselves to help in spite of their distaste.

IV. PROPERTY

The mind of this generation is inevitably led on to more fundamental questions still. It is faced with the mighty accumulations of property in few hands, property held for personal gratification or for power, divorced from its function to the community and serving private ends. It is driven by the very contrasts of fortune to test its principles again. Property may be a means of self-expression, held for use instead of for power, and private ownership may be justified by its ultimate service to the community. For the mass, this problem is a political problem : the true end of State control. But for the individual it is a personal problem, the true balance of the right to express one's self and to realise one's own development and the claims of others to the same opportunity. This generation is called by its consciousness of a new fellowship to a simpler life and an equalising of opportunity—the day of new democracy has dawned.

V. CONDITIONS OF INDUSTRY

It is the same with the problem of wages : there is no longer any justification for "relief in lieu of wages." Social justice as we see it demands wages at least at subsistence level, and industry has been

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forced by the State to approximate to this standard as a minimum. The personal problem for the young employer is a problem, not of alleviating misery caused by an unjust system, but the recognition of the principle that the corollary of co-operation in effort is due share in the management and in the fruits of labour. The principle, once given the task of adjustment in the face of a faulty system, calls for hard thinking, self-sacrifice, and self-limitation. But the Christian conscience is awakening to the struggle before it, and here and there all over the country is beginning to grapple with the problem.

VI. CLASS DISTINCTION

The Christian view of personality strikes at the root of many of the difficulties in the matter of the national curse of the existing distinctions. Christian fellowship challenges the segregation of men by birth, by education, by economic necessity. It should make the conventional class distinction among its own members impossible, and should be the solvent of class segregation everywhere. But until the particular Christian has taken the trouble to establish social relationships which run counter to his ordinary class prejudices, there can be no general Christian fellowship which counts.

VII. ENVIRONMENT AND PERSONALITY

These instances of the intimate relationship between our acceptance of the principles latent in the Christian view of life and the practical pro-

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blems of the modern world throw much light on the problem which perplexes all thinking minds, especially the minds of the young—the true relationship between environment and personality. In the first of these problems two books much read ten years ago seem to present irreconcilable views—Mrs. Sidney Webb's *Minority Report on the Poor Law* and Mrs. Bosanquet's *Strength of the People*. Character, victoriously struggling with circumstances and finding its own soul in the fight, was the burden of Mrs. Bosanquet's very noble book. Circumstance, the result of outside impersonal forces pressing with overwhelming weight on personality, crippling and impairing it, was the burden of the other.

We owe it to the march of the sciences, and especially to the social sciences and to psychology, that a solution seems now in view. Experiments prove that the nice adjustment of the functions of the community to those of the individual are the only remedy. Few to-day would abolish national insurance against sickness and unemployment or old age pensions.

VIII. PERSONALITY IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PROBLEMS OF RELIEF

It is in this connection that one can perhaps most satisfactorily regard the question of relief. This was a question which loomed large a few years ago, but is happily seen to-day in better perspective. "The poor" was a term which carried a multitude of meanings. To many of the leisured class it

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really came to mean the whole of the wage-earning classes of the country. It is a word which is falling out of fashion, as the working classes become more articulate. Unfortunately, the beautiful word "charity" has been degraded into a term of opprobrium. We have the clue in our hands. The true function of a man or a woman is to do service and to receive the fruits of service. If this is not conceded, his personality withers, and a whole crop of social evil emerges. Now it seems somehow inherent in human nature that one cannot interfere with this interdependence without grievous wrong. Service must be repaid by service, if not directly, then indirectly—the giving is not wholesome if not on both sides. That is the simple fact of the case. The moment one gives without remembering this fact, one begins to disintegrate the personality of the recipient.

The question then arises, are we *never* to give? The answer is, that depends on *how* we give. We must be clear first that justice comes before charity. We ourselves may be giving mean wages, or paying prices which indicate sweated labour. We cannot then justify ourselves by a generosity in doles. We must be clear that a due share is being paid in communal services, and that we are not with one hand keeping down the rates, which allow for these services, and with the other attempting by personal interference to make up the deficit in individual cases. If we want to give to people who are quite unknown to us, we can give anonymously through people who are already serving, and who therefore do know and are very thankful to administer; or we can give

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scholarships and books and pictures to schools and colleges, which will give young people a chance to develop and serve the community later; we can give to hospitals, or ameliorate the conditions in the public homes for the distressed and the mentally deficient and the asylums. There are many opportunities for safe and impersonal gifts.

But giving directly to persons is the privilege of friendship, because a friend, while he gives in material things, may receive in spiritual things. The obligation is on both sides. Giving is the fine art of friendship and is only excelled by the fine art of receiving. Robert Louis Stevenson has a humorous and stinging essay on this in his collection *Across the Plains*. If we want to give personally, we must take the trouble to know our neighbours personally, even if we are separated by half the length of the town, and when we have got to know them, we shall have a thousand opportunities for service. There is no short cut in human relationship.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN FOR SOCIETY AND HIS EQUIPMENT FOR SERVICE

In all these problems the interdependence of the personality of the individual Christian and the quality of the Society which is created by him has been emphasised. He moulds the world to his mind, or the world moulds him. Now less than ever can the new generation afford to let things drift. To those who are at work in the world an almost overwhelming sense of the need of haste

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descends. The issues are very complicated, the ruin terrible. Much has to be done to lift men out from despair of the possibility of spiritual victories. The problems press. The equipment for service is a long process. Training of imagination and judgment is a task for years. It is often hard to wait in patience for the need to dawn slowly on each individual soul. We know now that man's personality is one, the claim of Christianity to-day is on the whole man.

It is this fact which the Churches as organisations, in their human frailty, sometimes tend to forget. They forget the mission of their children is to be pioneers of the spirit in all the ways of citizenship—citizens of a world which is capable of redemption, which is always being redeemed, which must be won by spiritual toil in the seats of government in London and Geneva, in local administration, on the benches of magistrates, in the industrial world, as well as and as truly as it is to be won in the Church and in the family and in the convent. They forget that the distinction between secular and spiritual is a distinction of a pagan world, of a world only too glad to refuse the claims of the spiritual to have free course in the city and in the State. So men attempt the impossible task of making themselves into water-tight compartments and exempt their business and their daily dealings with their fellow-citizens from the obligations of the spiritual law. They forget that the price of spiritual achievement is the sacrifice of privilege, that persistent attention to one's rights tends to distract one's attention from one's duties. It is not always so. It would be

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illuminating indeed to see where those who are bearing the burden of authority and of service in the State and those who are helping everywhere found their inspiration for the task, and where they renew their spirits wearied out with the battle. It may be that it would appear after all by the mercy of God that the Churches directly or indirectly are leading still.

Another Commission is writing of the part of the Church itself in social service. For the individual Christian personal responsibility for the problems of Society issues either in service in association with others, whether connected with public authorities or voluntary agencies or both, or work done on one's own responsibility in private. Whatever form this service takes, the fact remains that to help in the shaping of human life is the highest of all tasks, to be approached with great humility. Social Service while it can find tasks for the most unlettered, if they be of the right spirit, requires the best of human powers. It requires study, fearless honesty of mind, perseverance, fortitude and courage: "the enthusiasm of patience." It is no light task to be taken up and dropped as an interesting hobby of one's spare moments. Thus while service becomes the bounden duty of Christians, they above all must recognise the need for training and discipline in those who would serve.

In every local Community there are some from whom the uninitiated may learn much: in the larger centres particularly, Settlements and other social agencies have a long experience to share with a beginner. There are special courses arranged at

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the Universities and Colleges for those who can take a regular course of study, and who yet are not able to undertake the ordinary course for degrees. For those whose lives are most remote from such centres there are books. Any honest inquirer can find guidance.¹ To sum up:

The time is ripe for a wider recognition of the following facts, that :

1. Social Service means a common effort to secure a better life. It does not mean the assistance of one class by another.
2. Social Service is necessarily concerned with the whole life, and therefore all forms of service are interdependent. The Health, Education, Employment and Recreation of the Community are all the concern of every Christian member of the Community.
3. To ignore past experience, or to refuse patient study and the acquisition of technical knowledge is not only idle but wrong.
4. While the past lies open to us through such study and training, the present is with us already shaping the future. Enterprise and wise experiment are urgently needed if we are to interpret the past in terms which are not

¹ Anyone who finds it difficult to obtain detailed information as to particular services, sources of information, training centres or other matters, may be advised to consult the Secretary to the National Council of Social Service,

Stapley House,
Bloomsbury Square,
London.

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meaningless to-day, and so to shape the future that we may not be driven on to an undesired goal by the relentless logic of facts which we have disregarded or misunderstood.

Signed :

WYNDHAM DEEDES. (*Chairman*).
WILLIAM BLACKSHAW.
J. R. M. BUTLER.
HILDA CASHMORE.
G. E. G. CATLIN.
R. M. GRAY.
G. J. JORDAN.
*RUTH KENYON.
CATHERINE MARSHALL.
HUGH MARTIN.
R. HOPKIN MORRIS.
MARION PARMOOR.
A. R. PELLY.
EUSTACE PERCY.
MAURICE B. RECKITT.
WILFRID J. ROWLAND.

* With the reservation that I cannot agree with the general line of argument of Chapter II, section iii, *The Church and Parties*. I believe that a situation has arisen to-day in which the Church should throw its weight on the side of that party which challenges the existing social and industrial system.

The members of the Commission who, having co-operated in the preparation of the above Report, attach their signatures, do so as individuals and in

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no way commit the Churches or Societies of which they are members. The acceptance of the Report by a signatory denotes agreement with the general substance of the Report, but not necessarily with every detail.

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE signatories find it difficult to compress into the form of recommendations many of the points in the preceding Report, to which they attach most value, but they submit the following Recommendations:—

1. AUTHORITY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STATE.

The State is ordained by God for the purpose of binding men together in a justly ordered social life, and its authority ought to be loyally accepted by Christians. The duties of citizenship are, therefore, a sacred obligation for Christian people. The authority of the State is limited by its function, but ought only to be challenged in the name of God, and Christians must not take that name in vain.

2. CLASS DISTINCTIONS

The Church must approach the difficult question of class distinction from the point of view that, for the Christian, there is “neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” In modern language, there can be no class distinctions in the Church. This principle no doubt applies in a peculiar degree to the Church, but the Church, in its effort to realise a more Christian order of society in the world around it, must use its influence against any recognition of class distinctions which might offer an obstacle to true social communion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. CHRISTIAN SERVICE IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLITICS

The Church should recognise the call to Christian service which exists in national politics, in local government, and in organised philanthropic and social work. These claims should be kept before all Christian congregations. The need for a high standard of preparation for such work should also be consistently urged, and for this purpose the formation of inter-party groups for the study of subjects of current political discussion from a Christian standpoint should be encouraged.

4. THE PRESS

Christians, individually and corporately, should use their influence in favour of a Press which not only presents accurate news, unbiassed by editorial policy, but also provides, so far as possible, all the materials necessary to enable the public to arrive at well-informed opinion on public policy both at home and abroad.

5. EVILS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION

Christians must do their utmost to foster the growth of a more healthy public opinion which will no longer tolerate the undue prominence given to sensational details of the divorce courts and of sordid vice, the incentives to wholesale betting and gambling, the vulgarity of much advertisement, and the exaltation of false values, which at present largely distort much in modern journalism and magazines.

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